**Fazl-i-Husain (1932).**

# FAZL-I-HUSAIN

## A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY

BY

AZIM HUSAIN

WITH A FOREWORD BY

C. RAJAGOPALACHARIAR

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To

*R. & R.*

## FOREWORD

IT requires a considerable amount of courage for a son to write a detailed biography of his own father. Much more is it the case when the powerful men whom the subject of the biography actively opposed and who still cherish the memory of it continue to wield vast authority and are in a position to make or mar the fortunes of any individual. Mr. Azim Husain has summoned the courage for performing what I consider is his duty. Anyone who is in possession of the precious material required for a biography of any of our great men owes a duty to give it to the nation. Differences of opinion are unimportant and even irrelevant for the aims and objects of true biography. What are relevant are the struggle, the courage and the sustaining strength of character, which inspire coming generations for the unceasing endeavour that the condition of our people claims at the hands of all talented men and women.

A great man has but little chance in a world so full of small men. Small men do not make things easy but ever try to impede on one ground or another. Thus the struggle is not only to be waged against the stupendous volume and weight of the work that has to be achieved, not only against the honest difficulties of the task to be performed, but also against the pull from behind by the small men that are impatient of the big men.

Had Fazl-i-Husain not become a sick man at an early age and breathed his last at the age of fifty-nine, in spite of his great desire to live a little longer so that he might initiate and build up provincial autonomy in the Punjab, the fortunes of the Unionist Party and probably the history of Muslim

politics in India would have been very different from what they have been.

It is not possible for anyone to escape one's environment or the passions and prejudices arising out of it. Even an attempt to overcome an evil often leads to misunderstanding and is misrepresented as co-operation and conspiracy with the very evil one struggles to overcome. The key-note of Fazl-i-Husain's policy was that democracy should be run by parties formed on non-communal lines and yet Fazl-i-Husain was represented by his opponents as a protagonist of communal politics.

Though Fazl-i-Husain did not live to complete his work, as he had wished, the authentic record of the life and work of such a man is of the utmost value to aspiring men and women who wish to play a part in the difficult task of building up this country's future. Muslims will read this book with pride, but others too may greatly profit by a careful reading of this record of the workings of the mind of a very able Mussalman statesman who loved and took pride in India. Hindus cannot fully understand and perform their national duties unless they note the workings of the best minds among Mussalmans and acquaint themselves truly with their aspirations, their doubts and their difficulties. Here in this book one has an abundance of the most intimate material of this nature which can be reflected upon in a scientific and patriotic manner by all, Muslims and non-Muslims.

There is nothing so unsatisfactory as a character-sketch written by an opponent or an unabashed sycophant. Little knowledge and much bias are often embellished and served out in antithetical rhetoric, imitating the style of certain popular English writers. Well-documented biographies are what are wanted. There is no doubt that a son, however well educated and independent in opinion, must be prejudiced in favour of his father and his work. But when he lays before the reader not only his own views but a vast quantity of authentic material, the natural bias can mislead no one and can be treated as a noble and justifiable incidental

circumstance. The precious material for a biography of this kind can only be possessed and handled by a near relation and here he happens to be one whose training and occupation qualify him for a just and purposeful analysis. All those who live in the present difficult times and who seek for enlightenment and hope in the task of building up India for her great destiny will find valuable material in this interesting biography of a great and active personality whose career coincided with the whole period of the Montagu-Chelmsford constitution in India and that of the discussion of the later reform proposals.

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

# INTRODUCTION

TO attempt to write Mian Fazl-i-Husain's life at all—the life of a man who held an imposing place in India's national life, and took a prominent part in many high national transactions; a man whose character and career may be regarded in such various lights, whose political interests were so manifold—is an act of temerity. To write his life today, is to push temerity still further. The ashes of controversies in which he was much concerned are still hot, and one such controversy has assumed vital importance in the form of the Pakistan issue; perspective, scale, relation, must all, while we stand so near, be difficult to adjust. Not all particulars, especially those of the latest marches in his long campaign, can be disclosed without risk of injustice to the feelings of individuals now alive. Yet to defer the task for thirty or forty years would also have obvious drawbacks. Interest grows less vivid; truth becomes difficult to ascertain; memories pale and colour fades. If a statesman's contemporaries, even after death has abated the storm and temper of faction, can scarcely judge him, they at least breathe the same air as he breathed, know the problems that faced him and the materials with which he had to work, and appreciate the limitations of his period. In the life of Mian Fazl-i-Husain there is another consideration as well. Indians generally, and Muslims in particular, stand today at the cross roads; one false move may mean slavery for generations to come, or bitterness, strife, and civil war between Hindus and Muslims. Mian Fazl-i-Husain participated in Punjab and Indian politics for thirty years, and took a prominent part in them for over twenty years; not impossibly the experience he gained during this time, the ideas he expounded after hard and honest thinking, may, now that

the dust of rivalry and controversy is laid, suggest some solution to those who are responsible for the future of this country.

Of several needful apologies, one concerns the difficulty of drawing the line between history and biography—between the fortunes of his community, his province, and his country, and the thoughts, purposes and achievements of the individual who had so marked a share in them. This is partly due to the fact that no authoritative and well-documented book on the political history of the Punjab during the last forty years is in existence, and partly to the fact that the subject is a man who exerted a dominant influence throughout the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms period—no phantom, but, in his own province, almost a dictator—and who held office continuously for a period longer than any of his contemporaries. How can one tell the story of his work and days without reference, and ample reference, to the course of events over whose unrolling he presided, and out of which he made history? Some may think that this book gives an excessive preponderance to public affairs in the story of a man's life, but the fact is that during the last twenty years of his life Mian Fazl-i-Husain had one interest and one interest alone—politics. His name is associated with a record of arduous and fruitful legislative work and administrative improvement. He was the chief force propelling, restraining and piloting his country at many decisive moments. No doubt a lengthy account of speeches, debates, bills, divisions, motions, and manœuvres of party, may become tedious at times, yet after all it is to his thoughts, his purposes, his ideals, his performance as a statesman that Mian Fazl-i-Husain owes his title to lasting fame. The track in which he moved, the instruments that he employed, were the track and the instruments, the road and the trowel, of politics. So much by way of apology for the one-sided character of this biography.

A greater part of the events described in this book concern the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms period, a period of agitation and preparation for the times we are pasing through now and that still lie before us. As the recent past is likely to determine the future of India for some considerable time,

it is of primary importance in the history of this country. In this recent past Mian Fazl-i-Husain played a vital role. "To pretend that for twenty years, with all the varying weather of the mind, he traversed in every zone the restless ocean of a nation's shifting and complex politics, without many a faulty tack and many a wrong reckoning, would indeed be idle." But apart from the interest of his personality, the part he played in the development of Indian political life, his leadership of the Punjab and of the Indian Muslims, and the vicissitudes in the political life of both, this biography of Mian Fazl-i-Husain raises four important issues:

(a) How far have democratic institutions been successful in India, and to what degree will the future rest with them?

(b) How far have unconstitutional methods been successful in winning national freedom for India, and to what extent will the future rest with those methods?

(c) How far has the communal problem been solved by provision of constitutional safeguards, and to what extent should these be retained?

(d) How far has social legislation solved the problem of poverty and economic inequality, and to what degree can future economic problems be solved by similar legislation?

With regard to the first issue, Fazl-i-Husain demonstrated that democratic institutions could be successfully worked in India. The process of educating the public to work them was slow and laborious, but in order to avoid the evils of dictatorship, it was certainly worth undertaking. In the transition stage, while adult franchise was still a distant prospect, and the mainspring of parliamentary power lay with the landed aristocracy, Fazl-i-Husain, with a lifelong belief in parliamentary deliberations as the grand security for judicious laws and public control over policy, endeavoured effectively to direct an appeal to the great masses of his countrymen. By providing leadership during this period he prepared a firm foundation on which democracy, with leadership emerging from among the masses, can now take shape.

As to the second issue, he again proved by example the great extent to which constitutional methods could lead India further towards the goal of national development and freedom. Though he failed to appreciate the value of unconstitutional methods in their own sphere, he certainly showed that the addition thereto of constitutional methods would lead India towards freedom more speedily. On the issue of the communal problem, he proved by demonstration that the method of providing constitutional safeguards, considered adequate by the community concerned, was the best and surest means of building a powerful united India, and that division of communities on purely communal lines portends great harm to Muslims as well as to Hindus. He also gave an object-lesson in the formation of parties on an economic rather than a communal basis, and indicated the means whereby a settlement between the Hindus and the Muslims could be arrived at, and the British jointly opposed by both communities. Some are of the view that a settlement between the Hindus and Muslims must be a communal settlement; but this much is highly probable, that had Mian Fazl-i-Husain lived longer, or had his policy been pursued by his successors, the communal problem would have been solved at least in the Punjab, in a way radically different from the method now proposed.

On the question of economic inequality he demonstrated by agrarian legislation what could be done to alleviate the sufferings of the peasantry, and although he was not a socialist, by the policy he pursued he wrote the opening chapter in a volume in which many an unexpected page in the history of Property is destined to be inscribed. He indicated how necessary it was for the State to take the initiative in raising the standard of living of the man behind the plough, and how this could be done by legislation and governmental machinery long before the masses were able to help themselves.

As all the above-mentioned issues are illustrated by the working of the Punjab Unionist Party, founded by Mian Fazl-i-Husain, a great deal of space in this biography has been devoted to its establishment and growth. This book should not for that reason be taken as in any way an apology

for or a vindication of all that has been done by this Party since 1937. It must be remembered that Mian Fazl-i-Husain died before he had completed the reorganization of the Party, and before he could lead the Party under Provincial Autonomy. Mian Fazl-i-Husain must be judged by all that he did till 1935, and all that he intended doing in 1936, and not by what may have been done in his name since. His mantle as leader of the Party fell, not on Chaudhri Chhotu Ram, who had indeed been leader of the Party from 1926 to 1935, when Mian Fazl-i-Husain resumed its leadership; but on Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, who had taken no part in the foundation or the reorganization of the Party, and subsequently failed to uphold some of its principles. The life of the Party during the last nine years has been marked by a series of departures from all that its founder intended it to be. To begin with, the Party came into power in 1937, on account of personal relations between Sir Sikander and Raja Narendra Nath, as a coalition with the National Progressive (Mahasabha) Party, which was radically opposed in principle to the Unionist Party. This was unnecessary since the Unionist Party wielded a safe majority independently of all other parties in the legislature. The Party was further weakened, and its ideological position completely abandoned, by an understanding with the All-India Muslim League under the Sikander-Jinnah Pact. The Pact provided that the Muslim members of the Unionist Party should also be members of the League, though the name 'Unionist Party' would continue. This alliance between a purely communal body and a non-communal party based on an economic programme, was contrary to the entire political philosophy of Mian Fazl-i-Husain, and indeed directly opposed to what he himself insisted on in 1936, when he declined to agree with Mr. Jinnah, or to allow him to form a Muslim League Party in the Punjab.

Further, the leaders who followed Mian Fazl-i-Husain failed to make the Party, as originally intended, a mass organization of the Punjab peasant proprietors, and it never developed beyond being a combination of the landed gentry inside the Legislature. The organization of tahsil and city centres of the Party never materialized. The ministry

relied a great deal on the exercise of patronage. Contrary to its programme, some of the indebtedness legislation sponsored by it, though directed against the money-lending classes, has been somewhat favourable to large landowners, and may replace the money-lender before long by the landowner, reducing the peasantry to the same state of destitution and indebtedness as before. Again, it was intended that the removal of a top-heavy administration, and the exercise of suitable economies, should make possible a large extension of social services in rural areas; but this was forgotten, and instead innumerable highly paid posts and a large number of parliamentary secretaryships were created, and high salaries fixed for ministers placing a greater burden than before on public funds. Various schemes of economic development, industrial as well as agricultural, designed to raise the standard of living in the Punjab, were not pursued with any degree of consistency or vigour. To add one more example, the main intention, in the formation of a non-communal party based on an economic programme, in a province where no one community predominated, was to have a stable majority in order to take over power from the Governor and the bureaucracy, an object which seems to have been forgotten since 1937. These are but a few examples, but they indicate the error of identifying the existing Unionist Party with the Party envisaged and founded by Mian Fazl-i-Husain.

That this biography should be without trace of bias, no reader will expect. There is at least no bias against truth; as there may be grounds for difference of opinion about conclusions drawn from given facts, every endeavour has been made not to omit facts which may lead to different conclusions, and often a bare statement of facts has been made to enable the reader to draw his own conclusions without distracting and tendentious comment. In order to check any infiltration of prejudice, the method of quotation from speeches, letters and diaries has been adopted, although very often paraphrasing would have saved valuable space. There is, it is hoped, "no importunate advocacy or tedious assentation." Mian Fazl-i-Husain was great enough to stand in need of neither. Still less has it been necessary, in order to

exalt him, to disparage others with whom he came into strong collision. From among masses of material to be found in his diaries and letters about personalities, only a few extracts have been given, not with a view to disparaging those concerned (and full apologies are offered here and now by the author for any pain caused to those who will be mentioned), but with a view to describing accurately the difficulties with which he was faced. Had it been found possible to exclude these quotations, without sacrificing truth, this would have been done, particularly because an ungenerous method would have been to him of all men most repugnant.

A large number of letters, and the full text of others, have not been reproduced. The existing mass of his letters is enormous. But then an enormous proportion of them touch on details of public business, on which they shed no new light. Even when he writes in his kindest and most cordial vein to friends to whom he is most attached (and he was attached to very few), it is usually a letter of business. He deals freely with the points in hand, and then without play of gossip or compliment passes on his way. "He has in his letters little of that spirit of disengagement, pleasant colloquy, happy raillery, and all the other undefined things that make the correspondence of so many men whose business was literature, such delightful reading for the idle hour of an industrious day." It is perhaps worth adding that for the most part the omitted passages hide no piquant hit, no personality, no indiscretion; the omission is due to considerations of space. His diaries, however, stand on a slightly different footing. His first diary deals with the period 1898 to 1901; thereafter he abandoned the keeping of a diary, and did not resume the practice till 1930, when he became a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. He maintained this diary, though at times spasmodically and indifferently, till his death in 1936. His diaries are a truthful and intimately personal record of his innermost thoughts and feelings and as they were intended by him neither to be seen by any friend nor, in all probability to be published at any date, they represent the core of his character, his ideals and his views. These diaries lay bare all that he was with

perfect candour; they leave nothing to be divined or disputed about Mian Fazl-i-Husain—the man. Quotations have been freely given from both diaries, but from the latter numerous entries, which might prove embarrassing to individuals mentioned, have been omitted; with this endeavour, that the general picture should not be distorted and truth should not be sacrificed for the sake of propriety.

I take this opportunity of expressing my grateful thanks to a large number of friends and relations of Mian Fazl-i-Husain, who have generously given their help in the collection of material for the writing of this biography, and in revising certain portions of it.

*September 28, 1945.* AZIM HUSAIN

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## CHAPTER I

## *BOYHOOD 1877-1898*

AMONG Bhatti Rajputs who migrated from Bikaner and Jassulmar to the south and centre of the Punjab, about the year 1500, were two newly converted chiefs of Dhhonia-poor, Saifuddin and his brother Qaimuddin, who came and settled at Batala in Gurdaspur district. Both received Jagirs from Babur, which they retained under Sher Shah Suri. Subsequently, the elder, Qaimuddin, was appointed a *Mutawalli*, or revenue officer, entrusted with the duties of superintendence of religious endowments, while Saifuddin was appointed a *Qazi*, or judicial officer. Under the Emperor Shah Jahan the position of Mian Muhammad Ashraf, the successor of Qaimuddin, was further recognized by the grant of the additional charge of the Charitable Department of the Pargana of Batala.

The close of the eighteenth century saw the decline of Mughal power in the Punjab, and the rise of the Sikhs. The diminution of Mughal authority in the Punjab injured the Mughal satraps most, and their assistant administrators soon found themselves dispossessed of their valued possessions. In this upheaval Mian Qadir Bakhsh, the successor of Mian Muhammad Ashraf, lost his hereditary office and his Jagir, and nothing beyond a small holding and a residential house was left of the large ancestral estate. His younger brother, Mian Imam Bakhsh, and his cousin Makhe Khan, both of whom were tried military officers of the Mughal rulers, offered their services to Ranjit Singh. Mian Imam Bakhsh soon rose to be a cavalry commandant and received the Jagirs of Chimiari and Kotla Muhammad Qaim in Tahsil Ajnala of Amritsar district. Makhe Khan fought some of the rebel *misals*, and was made a general. This

good fortune, however, like the Sikh regime itself, proved ephemeral. Makhe Khan, under the supreme command of General Sher Singh, died fighting against the British at Chillianwala. Mian Imam Bakhsh, under the command of Kharak Singh, held Gobindgarh Fort and refused to surrender to the British even after the British victory was complete. He was taken prisoner and shot.

Thus the family found itself at the commencement of British rule in the Punjab shorn of honour and position and reduced to straitened circumstances. Yet, like other Rajputs "reduced in power, circumscribed in territory, compelled to yield much of their splendour and many of the dignities of birth, they did not abandon an iota of the pride and high bearing arising from a knowledge of their illustrious and regal past."[1] A multitude had indeed perished in resisting the advent of the British, and those that remained were sullen and disinclined to co-operate with their new masters. Mian Ghulam Muhammad, the last of the *Mutawallis*, had no desire to emulate those who obtained wealth, power and position at the hands of the new rulers and throughout the fateful year 1857 he, and indeed the whole of the Mian family, remained aloof and unconcerned at the fate of British dominion in India.

Another Rajput family, but of Chohan descent, came to live in Batala, and Mian Ghulam Muhammad broke the family tradition of endogamy and married Bibi Fazl-un-Nisa, daughter of Mian Peer Bakhsh, the head of the Chohan family. The Chohans were possessed of an ancestry as great as that of the Bhattis, and contended[2] that the conversion of Eesurdas, one of their ancestors, was genuine and was effected by the piety and influence of the contemporary Muslim divine, Khwaja Mueen-ud-Din Chishti. One Qaim-ud-Din Panitpal[3] forcibly took possession of Mouzah Garh Rambagh (Karnal District), where his descendants continued to live till 1692, when one of them Mian Muhammad Sabar, won the royal favour and was awarded a Jagir at Soian (Amritsar District). Here he settled down. His great-

[1] Thakur S. J. Scerodia : *The Rajputs : A Fighting Race*, 1915, p. 2.
[2] An old family genealogical tree written in 1850.
[3] As yet Hindu names were adopted in the family without discrimination.

great-grandson, Mian Peer, Bakhsh, founded Mauzah Sherpur and while his two sons, Mian Sher Muhammad and Mian Nur Muhammad, settled there, his third son, Mian Din Muhammad, received as his share some land in Gurdaspur district, and settled down at Batala.

Mian Din Muhammad was a man of profound learning and was an extraordinarily good judge of men and affairs. He realized that if his family did not adapt itself to the changed circumstances of the times it would soon be faced with extinction. He decided, though unwillingly, to enter the service of the *de facto* Sikh rulers of the Punjab. As a noted scholar and a recognized historian, he was engaged as an *Ataliq* to Maharaja Sher Singh. Within a few years he secured an important post in the Revenue Administration of the Punjab and was held in great esteem by the rulers for his administrative ability. The confidence reposed in him led Maharaja Ranjit Singh invariably to entrust Mian Din Muhammad with the conduct of his important diplomatic negotiations. After the Treaty of Lahore in 1809, which checked the Sikh forces from crossing the Sutlej, Maharaja Ranjit Singh was contemplating war against the British in alliance with the Mahrattas, but Mian Din Muhammad and Faquir Aziz-ud-Din, conscious of the growing power of the British, advised the 'Lion of the Punjab' to refrain from such a hasty course and saved Sikh dominion for another forty years.[1] When finally the Punjab lost its independence, the British, who had not failed to notice the ability of Mian Din Muhammad, asked him to enter Government service. He agreed and as he had considerable experience of revenue administration he was made Settlement Officer of Sheikhupura. On the termination of the Settlement he retired and was appointed an Honorary Magistrate at Batala.

In 1846 Bibi Fazl-un-Nisa (sister of Mian Din Muhammad and wife of Mian Ghulam Muhammad) gave birth to Mian Husain Bakhsh, father of Fazl-i-Husain. Mian Husain Bakhsh was barely eight years old when his father died suddenly by an accidental fall from the roof of his house

[1] Griffin : *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, 1909, p. 298.

on a dark summer night. Mian Husain Bakhsh had no one to look after him except his maternal uncle, Mian Din Muhammad, who brought him up and educated him.

Mian Husain Bakhsh received the traditional kind of education in Arabic and Persian at the mosque. Mian Din Muhammad had broken the family tradition of reluctance to serve under the British and the younger generation followed suit, though not without misgivings and an extraordinary sensitiveness about self-respect. Mian Husain Bakhsh entered service at the age of twenty-two as a *Naib Munserim*, on Rs. 15/- per mensem, and in time by dint of his ability and hard work secured one of the highest positions an Indian could aspire to at the time. He was sent to Kangra as a *Naib Munserim* during the Settlement operations of 1869, and before the end of the year was promoted to the post of a *Sadar Munserim*. Sir James Lyall, the Settlement Officer, found him "intelligent, quick, hardworking and honest."[1] As a *Sadar Munserim* of the Peshawar Settlement he showed extraordinary ability in dealing with difficult questions of ownership, irrigation, *Riwaj-i-Am*, and organization of the Settlement staff; he was soon appointed a Deputy Superintendent. Three years later he was appointed Superintendent of the Deputy Commissioner's Office. The Deputy Commissioner remarked: "Husain Bakhsh has given me the utmost satisfaction, I regard him as a most intelligent, hard-working and well-behaved officer. He is prompt and systematic in the discharge of his duties and keeps his subordinates well in hand."[2] The Commissioner, found him "a master of revenue work in all its details as well as of judicial work," and recommended him for a Tahsildarship. He officiated as Tahsildar, and before long was appointed Deputy Superintendent in charge of the Rawalpindi Division for the compilation of Census figures. As a result of good work he was appointed Extra Assistant Commissioner at Peshawar, and subsequently transferred to Abbottabad as a Revenue Assistant. In 1891 he was promoted to the rank

[1] Note by J. B. Lyall, dated May 13, 1869.

[2] Annual Revenue Report of Peshawar District, dated May 12, 1877.

of District Judge and transferred to Dera Ghazi Khan. He served as a District Judge in various places till his retirement from service in 1904.

This rise from the position of a *Naib Munserim* drawing Rs. 15/- per mensem to that of a District Judge earning over Rs. 1,000/- per mensem, a rise accomplished without any extraneous help, is ample testimony to the character of Mian Husain Bakhsh. There was throughout his career not a single occasion when his conduct could have become the subject of public or official criticism. He never attempted to curry favour with the official world and instead believed in quiet honest work and letting merit be recognized by those who had eyes to see. His self-respect never permitted him to beg for promotion and advancement, and both came his way in the pursuit of what he considered, conscientiously and religiously, his vocation in life.

Mian Husain Bakhsh married his cousin Bibi Amir-un-Nisa, the daughter of Mian Din Muhammad. Of this union Fazl-i-Husain was born at Peshawar on June 14, 1877. Two sisters, Ahmada Begum and Sardar Begum, completed the family, but unfortunately their mother died in 1885.[1] Fazl-i-Husain, not yet eight years old, and his two sisters were thus deprived of the love and tender care of an understanding mother. Fazl-i-Husain was old enough to feel this deprivation, and it left a deep impress on his mind and turned his thoughts inward even at this early age. The happy years he had spent roaming in the streets of Peshawar, receiving lessons at home from his father, and loving his mother, were over. The year after the death of his wife, the official duties of Mian Husain Bakhsh took him to Abbottabad. Here Fazl-i-Husain began a new life, somewhat hard, chilly and discouraging. His father, as a revenue officer, had to tour the district frequently, and decided to discontinue teaching Fazl-i-Husain himself. He sent him instead to study at the local Municipal Board School. Fazl-i-Husain was a delicate, sensitive and intelligent child, and found the school discipline irksome.

[1] She died at the early age of thirty-two at Peshawar and was buried in the family graveyard at Batala.

On his return home from school he often found his father away on tour, and no one to greet him except his two sisters (one of whom was much older and the other not yet old enough to share his thoughts), apart from the overbearing maid-servant who looked after them, and a cook who never wanted to be interfered with. Food, clothing and rest were neglected, and his health began to trouble him and cause anxiety to Mian Husain Bakhsh. His fragile constitution did not permit him to play football or *Kabaddi* with his school fellows, and this forced him to spend the evenings at home. The rough Pathan boys found him too tame to share their pranks. He, on his side, found them too boisterous for his liking, and kept to himself. In this loneliness he turned to books and found them his best companions. Thus the time other boys spent in play, Fazl-i-Husain spent in stealing a march over them in studies.

Within a year of the death of his wife Mian Husain Bakhsh found the children, especially the girls, much neglected, and this induced him to marry again. He married Bibi Fateh Bibi, the daughter of Mian Sharaf Din, a Rajput of Qadian, and she came to Abbottabad to look after his household. Bibi Fateh Bibi was young; she found her quiet, studious, retiring stepson a contrast to her own exuberance, and therefore wished to see as little of him as possible. Fazl-i-Husain, with the memory of his mother still fresh in his mind, found her lacking in tenderness and sympathy. He experienced his first great outburst of grief when his step-brother, a few months old, died. He had loved his baby brother, and went to his little grave at the foot of the hillside, planted flowers on it and cried.[1] His father's house was no longer a quiet asylum for study, so he begged for permission to go to Peshawar to take his middle school examination. Mian Husain Bakhsh readily agreed, because the instruction provided at Peshawar was better than that of the local Board School of Abbottabad. The boy entered the Government High School at Peshawar, and lived in a dormitory of its crowded boarding

[1] Letter from Fazl-i-Husain to his daughter Asghari, dated August 17, 1932.

house. He had little in common with most of his class mates, kept to himself and studied hard. In 1891 he passed his middle school examination and came to Abbottabad to spend the summer vacation with his father. He had been at home only a few weeks when his father received orders of transfer to Dera Ghazi Khan. As there was no one at Peshawar to keep an eye on Fazl-i-Husain, and there was no suitable school at Dera Ghazi Khan, it was decided to send him to Gurdaspur to study under the supervision of his uncle, Mian Ali Ahmad Khan, who lived at Batala. At Gurdaspur Fazl-i-Husain worked hard but his studies were repeatedly interrupted by ill-health. Gastric trouble which had begun at the early age of six suddenly became acute and he remained more or less on the sick list for well over two years. In 1893, at the age of sixteen, he passed his matriculation examination from the Punjab University.

Fazl-i-Husain moved to Lahore and entered Government College for further studies. A tall thin lad of sixteen, dressed in a white *shalwar*, a long coat and a fez, arrived in college and settled down in a cubicle on the first floor of the south-west wing of the Quadrangle. He took very little part in the corporate life of the hostel. Similarly, he took no interest in sport of any kind whatever. This left him only his books and a few chosen associates. He kept to himself and studied hard. The controversy in 1895-96 over the separation of the Sports and Debating sections of the Union Club did not interest him, because he took no part either in sports or in debates. When, in the following year, the Punjab University Sports Tournament was organized for the first time and his college secured three out of the four trophies, Fazl-i-Husain felt unconcerned and did not attend the celebrations in the college.

What deeply interested him was work, harder and harder work. He took up English, Arabic, Persian and Philosophy for his Degree Examination. At that time the Degree Examination of Punjab University demanded a high standard of intellectual equipment, which led Sir Dennis Fitzpatric to observe in his Convocation address in 1897: "I am told that the tests of this University are so severe that

it has occasionally happened that a student who has failed here has succeeded in England."[1] The Director of Public Instruction admitted that "the Punjab University has fixed a higher percentage of pass marks in each subject than any other Indian University, the difference in the case of the higher examinations being enormous."[2] In 1897, the year when Fazl-i-Husain passed his B.A. examination, only 105 were declared to have qualified.[3] Fazl-i-Husain, moreover, did not confine himself to texts alone, but read extensively.

These were formative years, and Fazl-i-Husain was fortunate to have some very able teachers. In Philosophy, a succession of three remarkable lecturers influenced him profoundly. When Fazl-i-Husain entered the college W. Bell was Principal and Professor of Philosophy. He was a thorough-going teacher—earnest, methodical, painstaking—who never wasted a moment of his time in irrelevent talk. His principalship was an era of discipline in the college, and the essence of his teaching was accuracy of thought and expression. Neither of these lessons was lost on Fazl-i-Husain. In 1895 one Professor Ussher replaced Bell. Ussher founded a Philosophical Society, with himself as its President and Fazl-i-Husain, his favourite pupil, as its first Secretary. Ussher, much younger than his predecessor, became friendly with Fazl-i-Husain and initiated him into the art of discussion and taught him how to organize societies in the college. Early in 1897 Ussher resigned, and Mr. (later Sir) T. W. Arnold took his place. He had spent some years at Aligarh, was much admired by Sir Syed Ahmad and was a great friend of Shams-ul-Ulama Shibli Numani. He was a man of profound scholarship, both Eastern and Western, and was singularly free from European prejudices against Islamic and Eastern philosophy. A few months before he went to Government College he published his epoch-making book, *The Preaching of Islam*, which won him the unqualified admiration of the Islamic world. His favourite pupils were Sheikh (later Dr. Sir)

[1] Speech of the Chancellor, the Governor of the Punjab, dated January 4, 1897.

[2] Report of the Director of Public Instruction on the Progress of Education, 1889-90.

[3] The number in 1937-38 was 2,170.

Muhammad Iqbal and Fazl-i-Husain. He inspired them both with a deep interest in philosophy and imparted to them his profound admiration for Islam as a religion and as a socio-economic system. He advised them to go to Cambridge for further studies, and both decided to follow his advice. At Government College Maulvi Muhammad Husain Azad was the Persian teacher. He was an eminent scholar and one of the founders of historical research and literary criticism in Urdu; he was possessed of a critical outlook and a broad vision, both of which influenced Fazl-i-Husain.

Government College was at the time not a vast conglomeration of students unknown to one another, but a small community of 235 students, whom lecturers and professors knew intimately. The college was a homely institution, unburdened with formalism, regimentation and public-school insistence on sport. "The low ground now occupied by the Oval was a grove of oranges and lemons, which harboured boys and bees for many hours of the long summer days. Boys with their books and mattresses 'rolled about like tumbled fruit on grass' underneath the shady trees, adding to the hum of the hive. There was a venerable old banyan tree right in front of the small tower to the north. The small 'Dais' round the trunk was invested with many fond memories of generations of college students."[1] Life was simple and unencumbered with multifarious societies, meetings and annual functions. Contact between the staff and most of the students was both close and frequent. This gave ample opportunity to capable teachers to influence their students, unknown to the mass production educational institutions of India today.

Fazl-i-Husain was by nature reserved, quiet and shy, and he avoided company, especially rowdy company. He had a few companions, but never developed a deep and an intimate friendship with any one of them. At times, when pressed hard by friends, he joined them for a game of cricket; otherwise he preferred his cubicle and his books. This aloofness exasperated some of his more lively friends,

[1] H. L. O. Garrett : *History of Government College*, 1914, p. 48.

and they annoyed him by forcibly dragging him to their card parties, which he considered the most obnoxious way of passing time. Most of the students, however, respected him and regarded him, along with Muhammad Iqbal (later Dr. Sir) and Gopal Singh Chawla,[1] as among the most able in the college.

Throughout his four years in college Fazl-i-Husain fought bravely against ill-health and domestic worries. His gastric trouble, which by now had become chronic, made him weak and susceptible to a variety of ailments. Even a slight fever would leave him prostrate for weeks. This, however, was only a part of his burden. Every visit to his home during the long vacation was followed by depression and worry. His stepmother's attitude hurt him, and as he was by nature undemonstrative, he preferred to suffer in silence rather than make complaints to his father who, he knew, would be much distressed by them. Domestic discord became acute over the question of his marriage. His mother, during the last illness before her death, had expressed the earnest wish that her only son should be married to Muhammad Nisa, the eldest daughter of Mian Nur Ahmad. His stepmother had other plans, and controversy raged in the family for nearly a year, while Fazl-i-Husain looked upon the matter with some anxiety and waited for his father to decide as he thought best. Eventually, in 1896, Fazl-i-Husain was married to Muhammad Nisa, at the early age of nineteen. He had suggested to his father that the marriage be postponed till after he had settled down in life, but added that if his father thought otherwise he would not press his views. Mian Husain Bakhsh saw no reason to depart from the custom prevailing at the time, and Fazl-i-Husain agreed like an obedient son; but he resolved in his own mind not to live a married life till he had finished his career as a student and could take upon himself the responsibilities of being a father. He maintained this resolution for six years until he settled down and set up a home for himself.

[1] M.A. (Punjab), B.A. (Cantab), I.E.S., Professor of Mathematics, Government College, Lahore.

Muhammad Nisa, a bride of fifteen[1], was the grand-daughter of Mian Din Muhammad. Her mother, Bibi Amir Bibi, was the daughter of Colonel Sikander Khan, son of Ilahi Bakhsh, the renowned general of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. General Ilahi Bakhsh commanded the artillery, and was known as the best Artillery Officer in the Sikh Army.[2] The sons of General Ilahi Bakhsh, Colonel Fateh Khan, General Sikander Khan and Colonel Madad Khan, were all distinguished officers of the Sikh Army. General Sikander Khan succeeded General Ilahi Bakhsh as head of the Artillery, and inherited vast property, including a substantial portion of the city of Lahore. During the upheaval of the wars of annexation, Colonel Fateh Khan died fighting at Mudki; Colonel Madad Khan was killed at Chillianwala; and General Sikander Khan was taken prisoner and dispossessed of all authority and the greater portion of his wealth and his lands.[3] The young bride could be proud of her ancestry, but in strict conformity with the prevailing custom she was uneducated, except for what culture her home could give her. Her education began with the Quran and ended with the learning by heart of the first five chapters of it, and this was acclaimed by the family as a brilliant achievement. She was, however, skilled at cooking, sewing and managing a household.

Determined as Fazl-i-Husain was to postpone the bliss of married life to a more opportune time, marriage for the time being brought him only trouble and anxiety. His stepmother acted well the part of the traditional step-mother and mother-in-law of the Indian joint family system. Muhammad Nisa laboured hard at household work and for her pains received nothing but merciless criticism. She bore it all patiently because her husband was away in Lahore busy with his studies, and it was considered improper for a bride to complain to her parents of the treatment she received from her husband's family. She

[1] Born at Garhshankar (Gurdaspur District) on January 1, 1881.

[2] Griffin: *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, 1909, p. 281.

[3] *Lahore District Gazetteer* of 1893-96 mentions General Sikander Khan as a *Rais* of the District and a Divisional Darbari.

lived apart from her husband for six years and suffered in silence. Fazl-i-Husain saw her once during a summer vacation, and another time in 1898 before he went abroad. On both occasions they exchanged only a few words; while she was shy and self-conscious, his vow did not permit him to offer her a warm welcome. He knew she was unhappy, and it made him equally unhappy to be unable to alleviate her lot, but he considered his whole-hearted attention to his studies most important, and chose to suffer rather than neglect his work. On one occasion, when his stepmother refused to receive back his wife, because she had over-stayed by a few days a visit to her parents' house, it was decided to consult Fazl-i-Husain. His uncle, Mian Ali Ahmad Khan, came to Lahore to ascertain his wishes. On a hot July afternoon Mian Ali Ahmad Khan found Fazl-i-Husain in his cubicle deeply absorbed in a book. Fazl-i-Husain listened patiently to the disconcerting news, but refused to express any opinion, so as not to be involved in the controversy till he was free from his studies and the examination which was to be held the following month.

In spite of persistent ill-health and equally persistent domestic worries, he never faltered in his devotion to work. He was successful in the B.A. examination held in 1897. Out of a total of 105 successful candidates only four were placed in the first division. Both he and Muhammad Iqbal were placed in the second division, the latter standing first and Fazl-i-Husain standing second among Muslims in the University. On January 4, 1898, the Convocation was held in Government College Hall, and the Bachelor of Arts Degree was conferred on him, thus closing the first chapter of his life. He was neither a great scholar nor a brilliant examinee, nor did he win any special academic distinctions at the University. But he did something more important; he acquired extensive knowledge of his subjects, developed his capacity for hard work and concentration and, most important of all, he learnt the art of clear thinking and accurate expression. To this his diary, which he maintained for several years, fully testifies.

## CHAPTER II

## *ENGLAND 1898-1901*

MIAN HUSAIN BAKHSH considered the I.C.S. the most suitable career for his son and wanted to send him to England to try for it. Considering his resources and his liabilities, financially it was a great sacrifice for him, but he was convinced of the educational benefits and the chances that would be offered of a good career. Arnold suggested Cambridge University and Fazl-i-Husain promptly applied for admission at Cambridge. He went to Dera Ghazi Khan to stay with his father before his departure for England. The preparations for the journey consisted of securing a small outfit of European clothes and a resolution to maintain a diary regularly. Though barely twenty, Fazl-i-Husain was strongly imbued with a sense of the seriousness of life, and wrote with slightly pedantic solemnity:—

"I begin this diary on the eve of my departure to England. I hope to put into it all that strikes me as curious and strange. I will try to give descriptive sketches of the several cities and ports, which I will have occasion to see. Moreover, I will try my hand at characterisation of individuals and national portraits. No doubt my descriptions will, as a matter of course, be meagre; and my characterisation wanting in brevity; but after all everything will be underlined by true and scientific observation. Prejudice in no case will be let in. As the flitting memory is not the reliable treasurer of such valuable jewellery, I think it all the more necessary to reduce it to the letters of the alphabet, and to put them in the iron of pen, ink and paper. May God help me in keeping this diary regularly and carefully. Pray God, I may finish this diary

on my return to may native land, and that it may contain full accounts of my passage to and from and at England. God the Almighty be praised."[1]

"Ever since", the young diarist went on, "I was put under the yoke of study, it was father's heartfelt desire that I should prepare myself for the I.C.S. Competitive Examination. But then constant ill-health which had always claimed me for her own and scanty means never allowed me to think upon this proposal seriously. It had been my ambition too, but I never thought of it in a businesslike way. This accounts for the poor preparation which I have made for the examination. However, now I am going so far off, and I am told, to a country where purity is scarce, I have formulated certain principles for my own guidance. I need not put them in words, for being constantly in mind, I need not be afraid of their slipping away. During my first year, I am to avoid popularity, which means the loss of precious time. I must work as a carthorse. 'Patience and Perseverance' must be my motto. The abundance of hard work will no doubt discourage me, but I must work and work with all my heart. I should not allow my child-like longings for home to prevail upon me. All that is dear and near to me should be deposited in the sunniest corner of my heart; but this depository should hold no communion whatsoever with my head; it should be left clear to work for the examination. The members of my family will in time forget to think too much of me. How they will drag on themselves I must not think of."[2]

Preparations complete, the 28th August, 1898 was fixed as the day for departure. Muhammad Said, cousin and brother-in-law of Fazl-i-Husain, came to Dera Ghazi Khan to accompany him to England. The night before the departure, Mian Husain Bakhsh invited a large number of his friends and colleagues to a farewell dinner party. The next morning Fazl-i-Husain wrote:—

"Last night I had a headache and some slight fever. This morning I felt giddy, but I had to make myself ready for

[1] Diary—Preface, August 23, 1898.
[2] Diary—August 28, 1898.

departure. We parted. I left my house and I had again and again to force back the tears which more than a hundred times tried to force their way out. It is flattering to say that I parted without wetting my cheeks. But who knows my heart wept blood-tears when I left my sister and father. My father and many other gentlemen came to the river bank and we took the boat there. I had succeeded in crushing my tears, but my heart fluttered and the world about me seemed to be in a constant up and down movement. When I shook hands with my father I was about to cry and shriek, but through some higher power was saved from this misery. The boat took a fast start. The wind was rather fierce, and the river loud and ferocious. The boat shook many times and the waves tried to get in, but the edges of the boat only kissed them and kept them away. After a good deal of anxiety the river was crossed."[1]

Fazl-i-Husain described the voyage on s. s. *Australia* as follows:—

"In this mail steamer there are six Indian students 'homeward' bound for study. One is Muhammad Sharif[2] from Patna. He is a lad of seventeen brought up in some European School and knows nothing of Persian and Arabic, but has a smattering of Latin. His brother and uncle have been to Cambridge before him. Five or six years' hard work might secure him success in the I.C.S. But I fear he is not a very hard working boy. Another is my brother-in-law, Muhammad Said,[3] nineteen years old. He knows nothing worthy of note. Has but very little inclination towards hardwork. But then he promised his father success in the I.C.S. He might obtain his Degree (ordinary) at Cambridge, and be called to the Bar too. Then comes Abdur Rahim Kandi,[4] son of Azim Khan of Tank, belonging to Dera Ismail Khan district. His father

[1] Diary—August 29, 1898.

[2] B.A. (Cantab.), Bar-at-Law; failed in the I.C.S.; practised at Calcutta and later became Principal, Law College, Patna.

[3] Did not succeed in the I.C.S. and failed to obtain his Degree at Cambridge, but was called to the Bar.

[4] B.A. (Cantab.), Bar-at-Law; practised at Dera Ismail Khan, later Deputy Speaker, Frontier Province.

is immensely rich. Abdur Rahim, in spite of his very hard work, failed in the Intermediate Examination. He says he will work but I cannot expect much from him. There are two Hindu brothers, very similar in appearance and shape with a year or so of difference in their ages. They are odd chaps indeed. They do not know what they are coming for and talk nonsense. I have never known anyone more foolish than these chaps. They talk of getting a servant from India and keeping a cart horse in London, etc. I do not know what is the use of sending to England such very odd men."[1]

"I will relate today an event which shows a characteristic feature of the British mind; they think that everybody is bound to closely follow their fashions. Abdur Rahim showed a certain carelessness in wearing his shirt outside his pants. This engaged the attention of all and invited several remarks. An Englishman more pertinent than the rest remarked that his shirt was flowing outside his pants. Then another remarked that it was a pity he was going to England to join some college and had not respect enough for ladies to wear his shirt inside his pants. The foolish reply was that it is our Pathan fashion. But the pert rejoinder was that you are in a British Steamer and are bound not to injure the sense of delicacy and taste of the passengers. But the impertinent chaps went so far as to call him Mr. Shirt. However, to turn the joke into their teeth, I told Abdur Rahim to call his inveigher Mr. Pants, which he accordingly did and thus saved himself many annoying remarks and enquiries. These Englishmen, well, they are proud no doubt, and look down upon every other nation. Alas for the old Rajput Chiefs, those courageous valorous knights, strongholds of truth and purity, their bloody swords would have opened the arteries of pride and hate of the foreigners. But we, we degenerated sons of those noble men, are powerless. Let God regenerate us for he is vengeful and cannot brook the proud and loves the pious."[2]

"In the evening I went down to Abdur Rahim's cabin and

[1] Diary—September 17, 1898.
[2] Diary—September 11, 1898.

we were talking together, when a lady, a neighbour of Abdur Rahim, approached us and sat by us, and somehow or other managed to thrust herself in our talk. Another one joined the company and we went on talking and joking. A third one (some Police Officer's wife) joined the company. All the joking and talking was simply trash and all the three ladies seemed to be underbred. Abdur Rahim was asked to sing, and he, the presumptuous chap, without any tact of singing and without even the gift of a melodious voice began to 'hoohoo'. However, the ladies could not either admire or find fault with it and for his impudence he went on. I have mentioned the above incident, simply to show that the European system of liberty for women affords a great deal of facility for the corruption of morality. I am of opinion that it cannot produce a single good result while there is no limit to its possible defects. It comes to be regarded almost as a refreshment to have a flirtation. No, it is to pave the way for the success of evil propensities. Again, those women who have been crying for liberty must be worse than males. They must remember that very few of their sex bear such comely faces as to court general admiration. Now, if a woman who can lay no great claims to general admiration and gets herself married, she must always be in fear of a comelier and lovelier rival especially when she grows older. But if the Purdah system is enforced then every such anxiety is removed. As for the force of this argument ask a lady who is suffering from this same heart-rending disease, and she will open her heart by cursing the advocates of liberty for women."[1]

"We reached Suez canal. At its very mouth Suez lights entertain us. The variety of lights, their reflections in the sea, calmness of the weather, still starry heaven above and its flickering reflection in the sea bore a sight which besides being entertaining aroused several very serious reflections in me. Again and again to my mind came verses of Mr. Arnold. The stillness and calmness bore a very striking contrast to my disturbed and impatient mind.

[1] Diary—September 15, 1898.

Would the calmness be mine? No, it is a dream of the fairyland and in the very name of humanity there is a struggle which constitutes its nobility. . ."[1]

"At the evening-tide we reached Port Said. When we were at a distance many storied buildings on the shore and a number of steamers in the sea attracted our sight. After taking the evening repast almost all the passengers left for the shore. I also left in company with Muhammad Said, Abdur Rahim, Sharif and the two Hindu gentlemen from Meerut. . .The general impression of the city was a favourable one. We proceeded and the general merchants, cloth merchants, fruit sellers and all were there. But the abundance was of Restaurants and Coffee houses. When we turned to a by-street a number of boys and youths whispered in our ears—'beautiful girls, charming girls, prostitutes, concubines.' We turned a deaf ear to these wretches who are a curse to humanity. We were standing there surrounded by a lot of these devils, when two girls approached us Both of them were very well wrapped in *chaddars*, but they unveiled their faces and laughed in our faces, perhaps to charm us and attract our attention. I had but little time to mark their features. They were not much above five feet, not very fat, well proportioned according to their height, bearing pretty faces, but with no special or extraordinary charms. Their cheeks no doubt looked smooth but then their eyes were not enticing. In short, the girls which we thus chanced to see, were not charming. The morality of Port Said seems to be in common with other ports, rather lax, nay, it is even worse than can be borne, when we think of what we are and what we ought to be. There are a number of prostitutes and they have engaged a number of go-betweens. No doubt their abundance is to some extent to be attributed to those characters who pass by this port, because it is only their want, that has secured the abundance of supply. To me they have borne a spectacle which wounded my sense of honour of humanity; what a pity human beings should descend so low as to approach lower animals in worshipping their

[1] Diary—September 12, 1898.





Members of the International Muslim Association of Cambridge University—Fazl-i-Husain (President) standing on the left (1901).

Standing second from the right is Fazl-i-Husain; sitting second from the right is his father; sitting second from the left is Dr. M. A. Ansari; sitting third from the left is Justice Shah Din (1908).

passions... In fact, there is no religion extant there except that of deception, cheating and debauchery. Here the evil effects of a commercial place are most prominent. Our steamer s. s. *Australia* standing away from the shore with all its cabins lighted, and the lighted windows reflected in the sea presented an extremely beautiful scene. As we took our seats in the boat and rowed towards the steamer, the lights of the steamer reflected in the sea which was in motion, communicated the impression of a waving of fire, and this greatly pleased us. I was filled with the beauty of the scene about me and the splendour and the sublimity of the Power above overawed me, and I was mightily pleased and enjoyed this state of my mind..."[1]

"We had to pass through France, and knew no French. We devised many schemes of supplying our necessities. For instance we tried to give French garb to English words saying Cakio, Lemonadio, Bisquitto, etc. It served a little. But the dumb and deaf system worked very well. Supposing we wanted a dozen biscuits. Then we used to lay our hand upon biscuits, and raise our fingers and point to our breast, meaning by all this process that we want to buy so many biscuits. The shopkeeper would take out some coins, and show them to us, and we had to hand so many over to him."[2]

On reaching England, Fazl-i-Husain described his first day in London as follows: "It was our first day in London and let me tell you what effect this greatest city of the world produced on our minds. We had a bath, and clad ourselves in our new suits, and sat anxiously waiting for our friends. We waited and waited, but no friends came. We were tired looking down into Fleet Street from the drawing room window; we were quite puzzled, just like a dog put into a looking-glass house., We knew not what to do. To make the isolation all the more oppressive the hotel happened to be a very bad one."[3]

A friend of his father arranged for Fazl-i-Husain to live as a paying-guest with Mr. Hyams, Headmaster of a

[1] Diary—September 13, 1898.
[2] Diary—September 18, 1898.
[3] Diary—September 20, 1898.

county school. The next day, while Muhammad Said and Abdur Rahim went to look for lodgings, Fazl-i-Husain took a cab to 82, Brondsbury Villas, Kilburn, where he was cordially received by Mrs. Hyams.[1] London was at that time a more congenial place for Indian students than it is nowadays. Surendranath Banerjea once observed: "We were welcomed wherever we went, and everywhere there was a disposition to treat us with the kindness due to strangers. We were of course few in number and thrown largely in the company of Englishmen. We thus had an opportunity of studying English life and English institutions at close quarters, to the mutual advantage of both Englishmen and ourselves."[2]

"After an hour," recorded Fazl-i-Husain, "I was taken to the drawing room by Muhammad Ali.[3] He is a gentleman, Graduate of Aligarh College, resident of Rampur. He is now a student of the Oxford University, preparing himself for the I.C.S. He is quite at home with the family. Then came Misses Beck and I was introduced to them, Then came two Muslim gentlemen. One of them was attending the Medical College at Edinburgh and the other (the former's brother) had just arrived from India and was going to Oxford to prepare for the I.C.S. We passed an exceedingly pleasant evening, talked of literature, philosophy, politics and what not. This sample of the English home life is an extremely good one, and I daresay the purest. May God keep me in such pure honourable circles. Amen."[4]

[1] "Mrs. Hyams is so very kind as to do a lot of shopping for me, making my clothes, buying books for me, in short, she takes care of me. I cannot possibly pay for her sisterly cares—I wish I could serve her in some way. My sisters no doubt love me immensely; it is their pleasure to keep awake even during nights if they can serve me. I remember my sister sewing me a handkerchief for fourteen hours daily. Is it not wonderful, really they do worship me, and I believe I love them. But taking into consideration the few days I have been here, and that I should think hardly any of my merits had had occasion to display themselves Mrs. Hyams is so very kind that I cannot but feel highly obliged to her." (Diary—September 28, 1898).

[2] Sir Surendranath Banerjea : *A Nation in Making*, 1925, p. 21.

[3] Maulana Muhammad Ali (1867-1931) of Lincoln College, Oxford (1898-1902); failed in the I.C.S. and later in Allahabad High Court Examination in India; took up employment in the Opium Department of Baroda State but later abandoned it and achieved prominence during the Khilafat Agitation.

[4] Diary—September 21, 1898.

Within two days of his arrival he went to "Wren and Gurney", the famous coaching establishment for the I.C.S. competitive examination, and got himself enrolled for a year. The I.C.S. examination was a difficult one requiring considerable knowledge of many subjects. Fazl-i-Husain selected as his subjects Arabic, English History, European History, Political Science, English Law, Moral Science, Mental Science and Logic, and Elementary Mathematics. He maintained his studies throughout the following year though they were interrupted sometimes by ill-health. A few days after his arrival in London, Hyams took him to his family physician, Dr. Gester, who discovered a multiplicity of ailments, such as weak eyesight, a dilated stomach, and blood poisoning causing erruptions over the arms.[1] In another week he developed a bad throat and a severe cold. His eyes watered profusely and he lost his voice. Fever followed and caused his studies to be neglected for over ten days. During the following year such attacks were not infrequent, especially during the winter when London was enveloped in a thick fog or experienced a severe cold spell. Indifferent health always stood in the way of his whole-hearted devotion to work, but it never deterred him from his determination to do as much as was physically possible.

Fazl-i-Husain gradually developed new interests. The bicycle had come into general use in England in the early nineties, and by the end of the decade cycling was regarded, apart from its utility, as a fashionable sport. When Dr. Gester suggested it as a form of exercise Fazl-i-Husain readily agreed, and according to his peculiarly practical turn of mind he found other reasons for it as well, such as saving bus fares and time waiting for buses as also being able to enjoy the cool breeze of various parks.[2] Bicycling appeared a great adventure and Fazl-i-Husain wrote to his father about it. Hyams asked a neighbour to teach Fazl-i-Husain to ride his machine, after which Hyams helped him to purchase a bicycle for twelve

[1] Diary—September 25, 1898.
[2] Diary—September 26, 1898.

guineas.[1] He also took to photography, which at the time was a fashionable though an expensive hobby. A somewhat deeper interest was the theatre, but he did not like Shakespearian plays, and did not seem to have cared to see modern plays such as those of Shaw and Ibsen.[2]

A more serious object was the study of contemporary English Society. Fazl-i-Husain gradually found his way into English middle class society. Hyams introduced him to the Beck family, and he became a frequent visitor at their house with a standing invitation for Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Muhammad Ali introduced Fazl-i-Husain to a Mrs. Cooper of Richmond, and he received an occasional invitation to her parties. Some neighbours, the Drewatts, were friendly and hospitable. His acquaintance with Mrs. Arnold, mother of his former teacher Arnold, and Miss Arnold, her daughter, was interesting as well as pleasant. Ussher, also his former teacher at Lahore, and now newly wedded, occasionally visited London and Fazl-i-Husain made it a point to meet him. He spent his first Christmas in England with the Hyams at Bournemouth. There he met the Hilliers and also a large circle of their friends.

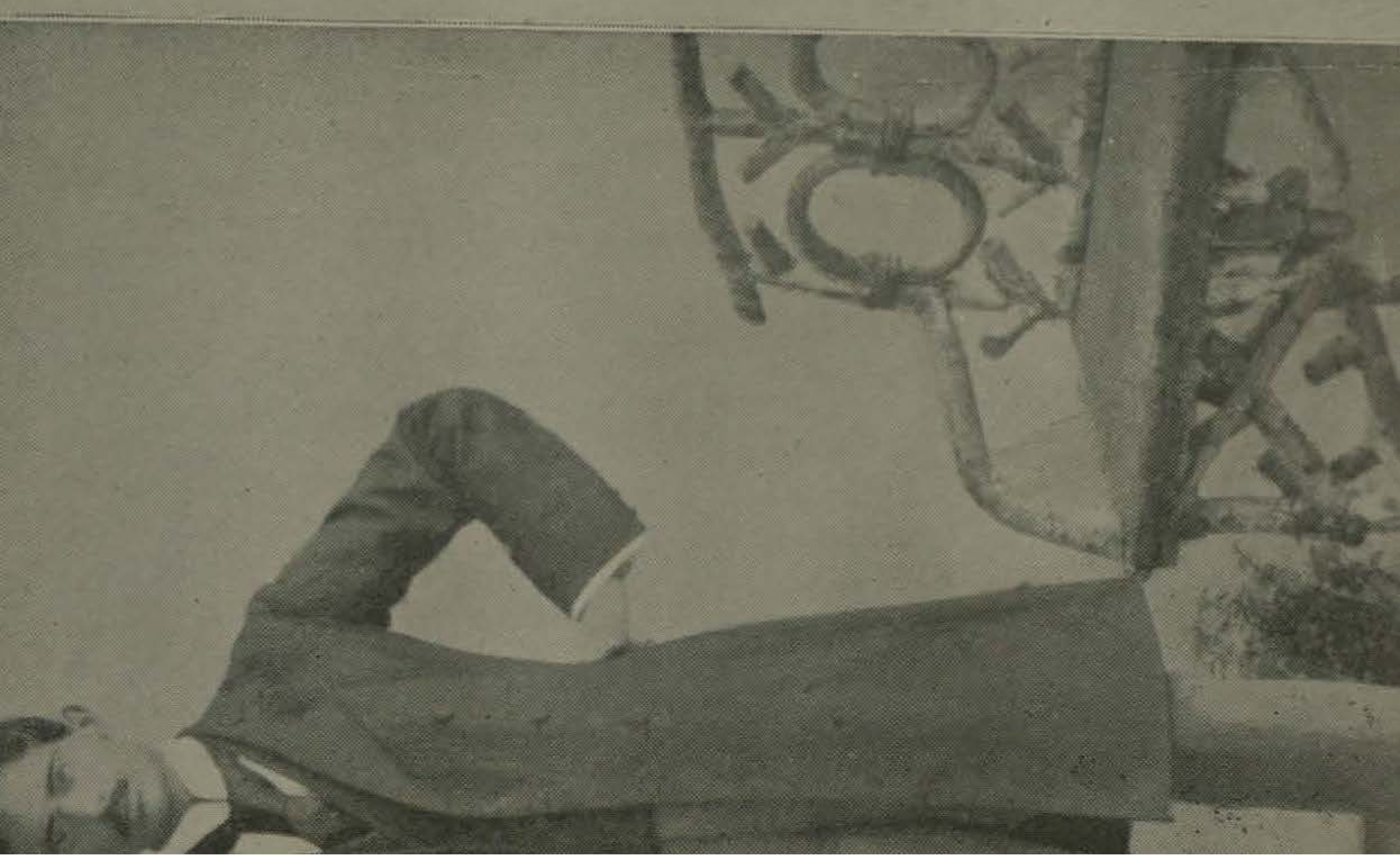
At the suggestion of Mian Husain Bakhsh,[3] Fazl-i-Husain saw Sir James Lyall, the former Lt. Governor of the Punjab. Soon there grew up a warm friendship between him and Sir James and Lady Lyall. When Mian Husain Bakhsh wrote to Sir James that he expected his son to acquaint himself well with "England and its great traditions", Lady Lyall asked Fazl-i-Husain to stay with them for ten days and took pains to show him some famous historical buildings and other sites. Another visit to Bournemouth, at the time a fashionable holiday resort of the upper middle class, and his stay at the Silver Howe Boarding House, brought him in touch with a large number of people and afforded him ample opportunity to study late Victorian middle class society. Thus a year passed in

[1] Diary—October 14, 1898.

[2] Diary—January, 1901.

[3] Letter dated October 20, 1898 from Dera Ghazi Khan ([illegible]).





Fazl-i-Husain as a student in England (1898).

Fazl-i-Husain on his return from England (1901).

hard work for the I.C.S. examination, and in the engrossing study of English life.

The first attempt for the Civil Service was a failure after which Fazl-i-Husain went to Cambridge. On 30th September 1899, he was admitted as a pensioner at Christ's College, Cambridge. The College was popular with Indians, and Fazl-i-Husain discovered among the undergraduates four Indians among whom he found Mian Shah Nawaz frank, genial and sincere. They soon developed a close friendship. Fazl-i-Husain was admitted to the University as an affiliated student and was permitted to take the tripos in two years. He chose the Oriental Languages tripos, and in his examination at the end of the first year secured a first class. The College authorities recognised his ability and hard work by electing him the same year as Pen's Scholar. He reviewed his first two years' life in England as follows:—

"Little less than two years have I spent in most unsparing hard work. I have denied all comfort, disregarded rest, shunned society, neglected health, dress and everything...what for...simply for my insatiable thirst for knowledge and to afford pleasure to my dear father and those interested in me. My first year I had spent at Wren's. There the treasures of unspanable knowledge were opened before my eye—the glow of which dimmed my eyes. The insignificance of my poor stock of knowledge came home to me—I knew nothing. But I learnt something more—more worth knowing and still least necessary for the peace of mind of an Indian slave especially if he has tender feelings. I learnt what independent nations call 'liberty' and understood, yes, even understood the distinction between Freedom and Slavery,[1] and when attending lectures on history and politics, I felt the perspiration of shame trickling down my forehead. Alas, the shame was irrevocable, irremediable the disease and irreparable the loss. What did I want? Endowed with more than average intellectual capacities, and

[1] "Government against the will of the people governed is the only definition of Slavery"—Graften.

ennobled with more than average noble blood and descent, not lacking moral insight and practice, nor standing in want of tolerable symmetry of physique,—am I an inferior simply because I am not English born? Am I to be a slave because I am an Indian. Little do I find admirable in Indian life or morals, still I am not ashamed of the land. Inseparably connected with it as I am, I cannot disavow the bonds of over two or three thousand years, which connect me with the land. During the days of territorial sovereignty there was no united India, nor ever there will be any, unless it is under the sway of a ruler, a foreign militant ruler. But in that independence, that sovereignty of the Rajas, there was social bliss, moral purity, and religious candour. What was wanted? Only a political tie to keep these independent Rajas together—a federal union. In short, federalism[1] was the cure, but bad luck and corruption could scarcely face the marauding bands which poured into India from the North Western Frontier. To return, embittered my feelings are, poisoned my peace of conscience for ever. Cry I cannot and quiet I should not be. Cursed be the moral fibre of the hungry dogs who would crouch under the lash and fondle with the bonds which administer poison to their political life."[2]

Concurrently with his work at the University Fazl-i-Husain continued his preparation for the I.C.S. examination, and sat for it again in August 1900. When the result was declared he wrote:—

"The result of the Indian Civil Service was out, and I was not on the list, I was not disappointed, because I was never sanguine of success. But the result, I must say it in all fairness, did disappoint me. I never believed in examinations, and never will in future. In Arabic I got forty-six, while in my first year I got 224 and in English Composition also I have got less marks, while in all others I have got more marks than I did last time. I deserved more.

[1] Federalism did not figure among speculations about the political future of India till 1914 when Sir Henry Cotton, President of the Congress, for the first time mentioned "the establishment of a federation of her separate States, the united States of India." Officially 'federation' was mentioned for the first time in 1918 in the Montague-Chelmsford Report.

[2] Diary—August 25, 1900.

In my May's I got 1st Division in Political Economy while in the Indian Civil Service I score some eighty marks. However, that which is done cannot be undone."[1]

"What are my prospects? I have failed in securing a pass in the Indian Civil Service and the alternative of the Bar seems to me one which I will have to undertake. And what is in the Bar? No freedom, no liberty. I will have to humour the men in the chairs, knowing all the time how unworthy they are of the seats they are occupying. The people—they will not understand me or will scarcely deign to understand me. In their innermost heart the slow murmur might arise, 'he says the truth,' but it will be hemmed in by the ferocity of the watch and ward that is kept. In this two years' work I have acquired much, my thoughts have become broader and deeper, my intellect improved though memory impaired. I have got an insight into modern politics, and into political rights and wrongs, political diseases and their cure—but knowledge is *not* power, if I am powerless. Shall I unburden my heart before the crowds which will have no sympathy with me? Destined by Fortune to have no private bliss, the happiness of a public life is a still more unattainable object. Still I must wend my way back to India. I owe a duty to my family, I must relieve my father of the heavy burden of a large family That will be my pleasure; I wish he will have a long life, and my delight will be to secure him comfort, to bring up my brothers and sister, to see them start well in life—and then my duty to my family is done. If the thunderbolt of death strikes me at such a juncture when I have passed through two score of years, I will not die an unhappy man. . . In fact, my individual prospects are by no means pleasant. To have a good practice is a matter of luck more than anything else. I might succeed fairly well, but I do not feel interested in it. I have to lower myself to its level, it is demeaning."[2]

This failure after two years of hard work depressed Fazl-i-Husain, but the depression was short-lived, and his

[1] Diary—October 10, 1900.

[2] Diary—August 25, 1900.

realistic matter-of-fact mind, helped by his surroundings, soon restored his balance. "I was at Folkstone", he wrote, "when the result was out, and I am pleased to think that I was in a very jolly company and that the disappointment of the examination did not affect me in the least. I had tennis to occupy my physical energies, and pleasant company to occupy my thoughts."[1] Faith and confidence in the future were not long in regaining their original vigour. He refused to believe that his failure signified any intellectual inferiority, though it hurt him deeply not to have been able to fulfil the cherished wishes of his father. Mian Husain Bakhsh allayed his disappointment with words of sympathy and good counsel. "I hope", his father wrote, "you are not worrying too much. The truth of the matter is that the Civil Service and the Bar are equally good as professions for an honest man, except perhaps, that the Bar is better for accumulating wealth and from this point of view the Bar is better than service. In Government service it is necessary to genuinely believe in the policy of Government as has definitely been decided in the case of Mr. Bose. The finances of Government are largely derived from the peasantry and you are fully aware of their plight. The pay of Government servants is paid from the revenue so collected. If a man works as a barrister honestly and always stands for justice and righteousness then in my opinion his earnings are rightly deserved, but very often it is difficult to say whether there is a moral right to earnings in certain cases. At any rate, in criminal cases there are often complaints against the doctors and the police, and a counsel can always do something useful. Moreover, a capable barrister is always valued by Government. . . With the grace of God you have acquired considerable academic knowledge and by temperament you are inclined towards analysis which is an asset to a lawyer. The only thing you need is the art of public speaking and that you should acquire by attending lectures and debates, and practising it yourself. It would be most useful to you as a barrister. Not much money is required to start a practice, and if I

[1] Diary—October 10, 1900.

am free to do so, I shall give you assistance in your work, and in a very short time we will be able to build a good practice."[1]

This understanding attitude of his father encouraged him, and he decided to prepare himself for the Bar and public life. Losing the prospects of the comfortable life of a Civilian did not deter him from making a new effort, and the approach of a hard struggle for a livelihood did not depress him. He was instead buoyed up by the knowledge and insight he had gained, as well as by the awareness that had come over him of the political subjection of his country and of the difficulties that lie in the way of regenerating an enslaved people. His failure in the Civil Service examination released in him the same dormant faculties that made some of his countrymen great leaders of their people. Manmohan Ghose, C. R. Dass, Shadi Lal, and later Shah Mohammad Suleman all failed in the I.C.S. and chose the Bar and public life as their career. A similar failure drove Maulana Muhammad Ali and Arbindo Ghose in to public life.

Soon after the results Fazl-i-Husain prepared an elaborate programme and resumed his studies.[2] He worked moderately for the Oriental Languages Tripos and secured a Second Class at the end of his stay at Cambridge. He joined Gray's Inn and passed the various examinations prescribed by the Council of Legal Education. On 29th June, 1901, he signed the roll of Barristers of the High Court of Justice, in the King's Bench Division.

During his first year at Cambridge, Fazl-i-Husain successfully maintained the resolution made in India not to take part in the activities of the University, and concentrated on his academic work. But during the Michaelmas term 1900, he threw himself whole-heartedly into the busy life of the University. He began by participating in the College Debating Society, and by writing articles for the College Magazine.[3] His articles on Hafiz, Sa'di and Ghalib were much appreciated. He joined the Majlis, the

[1] Letter dated November 12, 1900 from Jullundur (Urdu).
[2] Diary—October 11, 1900.
[3] Diary—October 19, 1900.

University Society of Indian students, and took an active part in its activities. Convinced of the importance of public speaking both from the point of view of a lawyer and from that of a prospective public man he took lessons in it. Towards the end of the term he made speeches in the Cambridge Union, and during the next term became sufficiently popular to be given two "paper speeches". His importance in the Indian Majlis increased rapidly, and he was elected President for the term. At the presidential debate he moved that "It is better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all." "My recitations," he wrote, "were acceptable to most of the students and my remarks were much admired. They listened with keen interest and intense admiration. D. R. Sawhney of Trinity was in raptures over my remarks. They thought I had the most minute knowledge of amorous affairs. I won the motion."[1]

During the Christmas vacation a trip to the North of England inspired him with a new idea. While at Liverpool he went to see the reputed Muslim religious mission,[2] and described his visit as follows:—"After a lot of trials and waiting about, I saw Mr. Abdulla Quilliam. He is an unassuming sort of man, one whose appearance is not that of an enthusiast or one who would carry out wholesale changes, or one born to change the state of affairs. There is no fire in him. His appearance is neither impressive nor majestic. And yet he is the Sheikh-ul-Islam of the British Isles; what is its secret? In this case it appears to be

[1] Diary—January 20, 1901.

[2] "An English solicitor, Mr. William Henry Quilliam by name, had embraced Islam after an independent study of the Quran and various works on Muhammadanism. His attention had first been drawn to this faith, while on a visit to Morocco in 1884, where he was especially sruck by the apparent sincerity of the followers of Islam and the absence of drunkenness and other vices that so forcibly obtrude themselves in the great cities of England. He instituted a Muslim mission in the city of Liverpool, where after 5 years' labour he gained about 30 converts. More vigorous and active methods of propaganda were then adopted, public lectures were delivered, pamphlets circulated, a magazine published and the doctrines of Islam vindicated by open air preachers. Ten years after Mr. Quilliam's conversion the number of English converts had risen to 137. This missionary movement has attracted considerable attention in the Muhammedan world, especially in India, where every incident connected with the religious life of the English converts is chronicled in the Muhammadan newspapers." *The Preaching of Islam*, T. W. Arnold, 1896, pp. 369-70.

immense application, perseverance and untiring energy—work and work. This one man is a leading solicitor, a very busy occupation no doubt. He conducts two papers—*The Crescent* and the *Islamic World*, attends to correspondence and now and then delivers lectures and then finds time to write books and pamphlets. Besides this, he possesses one virtue—common sense. And it is this unique and rare virtue which has secured him his large practice and his prestige. Does he believe in Islam? Well, we can interpret conduct in various lights. Still it appears to me that we should think of others generously. He does not show the enthusiasm of a convert, and his schemes are plausible but are productive of no immediate results. He naturally enough appears to be fond of leadership and of raising his own prestige higher and higher. His office is lacking in cleanliness and looks quite shabby. Two rooms on each floor, and he occupies two floors. All were law offices; but go under the name of 'The Crescent Office'. I went to see the mosque at 8, Brougham Terrace. The house was exceedingly dirty, why? Tonight there is a debating society meeting. There was no mosque to be seen. I was rushed into a room called the mosque, but there was nothing to show that it was a mosque with the exception of an engraved *Kalma*, 'Allah' and 'Muhammad,' etc...Then I went to see the Printing Press which was also in an awful state of uncleanliness. In the afternoon I had a long chat with Mr. Quilliam. I remarked to him—

(1) As to the improvement Crescent needed.

(2) As to the thing as a whole.

He admitted that the net gain did not appear to be much, but that he had been trying to remove prejudice, and had thus paved the way for the advent of Islam.

(3) As to the lack of unity amongst Muslims. He showed his willingness to visit Cambridge if I were to form an association."[1]

Fazl-i-Husain was convinced that modern conditions had rendered proselytising in Europe almost an impossibility. He regarded conversion in England an "idle and childish

[1] Diary—January 8, 1901.

dream,"[1] but what he thought both possible and desirable was unity among Muslims, and to this he turned his thoughts on his return to Cambridge. He decided to form a Muslim Association, and described its inception in the following words:—

"Today I had invited thirteen people to tea; all Muslims, and the object of all this was to found an Association for Muslims only, and to arrange about the Id. I started in a guarded way and successfully showed to my guests the necessity of such a body, and they were ready to fall in with my views. They appointed me as the Acting Secretary and we started; and then in conjunction with Sherafat and Wahby, I was asked to frame rules, which I did."[2]

During the next few days he was busy getting in touch with Muslims residing in Cambridge and in making arrangements for Id prayers, an occasion which was also to serve the purpose of placing the proposed Muslim organization on a firm foundation. Id prayers and an Id dinner were arranged, and at both functions Fazl-i-Husain was asked to preside. The organization of the Muslim Association was completed, and the rules, already framed, were published.[3] The newly created body was called the International Muslim Association. It proved a success, and in the following term Fazl-i-Husain was elected its President. The Association is alive to this day.

It is remarkable how Fazl-i-Husain, though deeply influenced in certain directions by life and thought in England, did not imbibe an uncritical enthusiasm for the West which dominated the later half of the life of Sir Syed Ahmad. For example, he considered the belief that the Victorian civilization was the apex of all human progress rooted in self-deception. He believed that the peculiarly English habit of shirking fundamental issues disqualified them from the all-important task of adapting the inner self to the changes in the outer world—the world of the Industrial Revolution. His opposition to the idea of

[1] *Muhammadan Regeneration*—A lecture by Fazl-i-Husain on the 18th Anniversary of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam of Lahore.

[2] Diary—January 19, 1901.

[3] Diary—January 22, 1901.

predestination and the supposed 'order' in the world led Fazl-i-Husain to believe in a world lacking in purpose, and in a constant state of flux. This inspired him with a will to change and mould his environment and let human reason give it a meaning and a purpose. Hence his intense belief in organization by the human mind and will. This meant a collective expression of a common faith or outlook, such as the Church had supplied during the middle ages, or as Fascism and Bolshevism have been attempting, each in its own fashion, today.

During one of his summer vacations, Fazl-i-Husain visited the industrial North of England, and there saw the relentless ravages of the Industrial Revolution and the growth of industry at the expense of agriculture. He witnessed extreme poverty and the disappearance of life and vigour from the beautiful English countryside. He noticed many undesirable features of industrialization. At Mow Hop he saw young girls employed in a factory. The families of the working classes were large and the death rate among their children was very high. The children were underfed, they lived in small insanitary homes, and grew up in ignorance and squalor. This vanishing glory of the countryside and the growth of ugliness in the wake of industrialization made him wonder if such a conflict was inevitable, and he pondered over the possibilities of reconciling agriculture and industry.

"There are two main interests", he wrote, "which have clashed in the past and which clash now—the landed interest, and the manufactory interest. The former is of great importance and has far-reaching effects. It is farmers that provide us with fighting men, it is farmers who are the life and soul of England or of any other country. If farmers are the essence, manufacturers are the necessary conditions of its prosperity; and the existence of both is necessary. Now there is a tendency—

(1) for farm-house labourers and poor farmers to go to the manufactories;

(2) for the manufactory proprietors to grow richer; and

(3) for the farmers to grow poorer and more discontented. What is the solution?

The two interests should be combined. We cannot dispense with the landed interest, because of its far-reaching political effects. Let the landed interest take part in manufactories which will be conducted on such principles as would not damage the landed interests."[1]

Fazl-i-Husain belonged to a middle class family, and found in the contemporary middle class society of England certain features to strengthen some of his own predilections. The economic life of the English middle class was one of merciless competition, which created and fostered a habit of determination and tenacity of purpose. The Victorians had the power of concentration, the ability to keep any creative idea in the mind at a steady heat until it was crowned with achievement. They took themselves with portentous seriousness. They were also intensely moral, and morality meant the faculty of concentrating the will invincibly on what one took to be good. Mathew Arnold epitomized his age in the phrase: "High seriousness," Fazl-i-Husain, already convinced of the seriousness of life, found this attitude profoundly attractive.

The very seriousness with which the Victorians took themselves tended to foster personality and the conception of independence as the basis of individuality. Queen Victoria, J. S. Mill and Herbert Spencer, all exhibited in their various ways a raw and aggressive spirit of independence. The distinctive quality of life was that the flood tide of personality was perpetually overflowing its banks, often with incalculable effects. They disciplined and guided their earnest exuberance so as not to waste it or let it run into destructive channels. This permeated the farthest reaches of the mind of Fazl-i-Husain, for in him the development of personality was inextricably interwoven with rigid self-discipline. Milton's *Areopagitica*, Mill's *Liberty*, and Mazzini's *Duties of Man*, all moved him deeply and individual liberty became for him the *sine qua non* of civilized society. Liberty, however, to him did not mean

[1] Diary—March 12, 1901.

license to do anything one liked: it meant instead liberty to do right. This equal love of liberty and of discipline taught him to pursue with all his might whatever he took up. He trained himself to self-denial, to the sacrifice of the lesser and to the greater. The outcome was strength, if not sweetness, of personality.

In matters of art and literature, Fazl-i-Husain found the general atmosphere prevailing in England at the time congenial to his temperament. He was incapable of "that willing suspension of disbelief which constitutes poetic faith". He looked more for intellectual satisfaction than for any pleasure his senses or imagination could give him. He had little time for aesthetic criticism; his academic pursuits left scant leisure for artistic pleasures. He visited the National Gallery and the British Museum, but neither inspired him to write in his diary anything more than the fact that he had visited them. His nearest approach to art was his interest in photography. He was, however, cautious enough to make sure that photography did not require proficiency in any other art. "I asked him" (Lord, the great photographer), he wrote, "if it was necessary for a good photographer to be good at drawing. He thought that the two were two distinct arts and that one did not have much to do with the other."[1] Music did not interest him much, and the few visits he paid to concerts during his first vacation in England were made more out of curiosity than for any special pleasure Western music could give him. Similarly, though the theatre proved somewhat more interesting than painting and music, his interest in drama was rather that of one interested in social problems than of one capable of enjoying a play for its own sake. Similarly, in literature he was not moved by any wide sympathies and though he read English poetry and prose extensively, no author moved him deeply. His touchstones were "moral worth", "wisdom", and "intricacy and cleverness of ideas". His choice of books showed lack of deep interest in any special type of literature, though he formed an independent judgment of his own, often severe, of every book he read.

[1] Diary—December 12, 1898.

He shared with the Victorians the new interest in detective stories and acquired a permanent taste for this type of literature.

With regard to the opposite sex Fazl-i-Husain recognized the power it could and sometimes has exercised over men and affairs. "What capacities", he asked, "she has of purity, tenderness, goodness, what capacities of vileness, bitterness and evil. Nature must need be lavished with the mother and creator of men, and centre in her all the possibilities of life. And a few critical years decide whether she is to be full of sweetness and light, whether she is to be the vestal of a holy temple, or whether she will be the fallen priestess of a desecrated shrine. She has the fatal gift of beauty, and that more fatal gift which does not always accompany mere beauty, the power of fascination, a power that may indeed exist without beauty."

Once in a moment of self searching, Fazl-i-Husain exclaimed to himself: "You shame yourself, you shame me, you shame us all; Man, did God put a light of genius in your soul merely to be quenched by the cravings of a bestial body? What associates are you for us? How can you help us in the fulfilment of our ideal dream? By day you mingle with littérateurs, scientists and philosophers, but by night you wander like this—insensate, furious, wrapped in soul, muddled in brain, and only the heart of you alive—the poor unsatisfied heart, hungering and crying for what itself makes impossible".[1] After a year's stay in England he was able to congratulate himself: "What I was so afraid of, thank God, I got over without any insurmountable difficulty. I have tested myself and found me strong—that is something to compliment myself upon".[2]

[1] Commenting upon E. W. Savi's novel *The Daughter-in-Law* written to frighten English girls from marrying Indians, Fazl-i-Husain observed: "I think a novel should be written on these lines—a young Indian bachelor is in Cambridge and passes his vacation with a friend whose sister is beautiful and well educated. Their companionship grows. He comes back, works hard and makes a position for himself in six or seven years. At thirty he returns and marries. They live together and are very happy and work together to uplift the country. All the educated pay homage to her. She helps the women and girls. Europeans are persuaded to take up the work of uplifting and then both communities understand each other better." (Note dated January 20, 1917).

[2] Diary—May 30, 1899.

He conceived of love not as an irresistible force, but as a blind urge, to be restrained and confined within the bounds of reason. He wrote:—

"Beauty: Yes, A.B.C. are very pretty. Yes, D is charming. Oh! but not the grace of E. So on the social Miss Quibbles goes on in the cosy drawing room. I have known people madly in love with the most odious persons, and what is rare in experience—neither physically beautiful, nor morally admirable and not gifted with any intellectual superiority nor with riches—and still the idiot dotes upon her and considers her the only venus upon earth. Love is blind, said old Willy—poor boy, he was not far wrong considering that his mother-aged wife had been his charmer, and perhaps too soon made him a father. A still more remarkable thing occurs in human life—you see a person of considerable physical and moral beauty, affectionate, and even loving and still, the irony of fate, the human heart won't incline that way. Even worse—having once adored the same, considered her very pretty and pure, all fondness flies away in spite of the object of affection remaining as pure and moral as ever. Reason fails to satisfy us on the point and ordinary experience brings us face to face with undeniable facts. Have months, weeks and even days lessened the glow of blooming cheeks or the ensnaring locks—or the charming eyes—do things change so soon—no, when thinking and not feeling, the ravages of time have not laid waste any portion of that prosperous personage. Then why. It is but a whim of the mind, and why should it not be over-ridden? People should try to render their senses superior to their fancies. Efforts should be made to get rid of the morbid humours which disturb the balance of the soul."[1]

"Dancing," he wrote, "appeared to be on the whole democratic, but with little, yes, very little element of feeling. They danced because they had to dance, and not because with every step their hearts beat high. There was frigidity and feelinglessness which could not be explained. The sweet nothings so often talked of in the romantic

[1] Diary—July 5, 1899.

descriptions, are now absolutely useless. The girl knows that they are nothing and the vicious habit of paying compliments puts sincere admiration at a great loss. Where convention reigns supreme, where speech is modelled on the pattern of strict etiquette, where feeling is stifled, where sincerity is left in the lurch, there cannot be much elevation of spirit. All that is noble in humanity is left where it was and in fact ceases to exist through want of use. The communion of souls akin to each other is not held; and instead of cherishing unanimity of feelings there is suspicion and distrust that prevails amongst both the sexes."[1] Fazl-i-Husain also thought about the superiority of European social institutions, particularly in respect of marriage, over their Indian counterparts. He refused to accept the superiority of the western mode of contracting marriages partly on rational grounds and partly because his desire for inner freedom revolted against artificiality. "It is all very well," he wrote, "to talk of western civilization as embodied in their mode of contracting marriages. However, if you begin to think, of it, it is as bad as any. Roughly speaking, in the middle classes, marriages are of two kinds—friendly, wise and prudential; secondly unwise and foolish. The latter, they say should not be contracted. But why? Because these are rash, and the man in his first heat does not know what he is about, i.e., he is blindly in love. They marry and are bent upon being the happiest couple alive—and soon it turns out that they are anything but happy. The former sort—they calculate and then marry, they say that love is lasting. Yes, because there was never any love in the whole affair. Money and title are the only objects and the pretty girls are generally inclined to accept and even angle for rich ugly husbands, and then they will leave society, the complex conception which in higher circles conveys most mysterious meanings. Again, marriages in advanced ages presume that she had made the most of her time during the period of her maidenhood and in fact enjoyed life, while marriage on the contrary means more sober and restricted life. A girl is supposed to have a social claim,

[1] Diary—May 20, 1900.

a right which must not be denied to her, and then the period between her attaining maturity and getting married is the most enjoyable period of her life in more respects than many, and when she is married—she is supposed to give up her universal smiles, and on the whole lapse into a dull sphere of housekeeping and invariably seeing the face of the same man every morning it gets too monotonous and midday time tends to become enjoyable as affording varied experience, and the afternoon visitation is her only solace, where movements in higher circles and frequent balls are denied. In the East, it is just the reverse. A girl is supposed to wear her hair in such a way that she does not look especially attractive. She is not supposed to loiter about, though when married she gets more license to do so. She is not to adorn herself or put her beauty to its best advantage—no, all this is deferred till after marriage. During maidenhood she is simplicity personified—she is unconventional, pure and simple. To be attractive is not within her objects, on the contrary, she would conceal her pretty locks, lest she becomes the object of rude staring. An English girl on the contrary would do her best to show off her hair, arms and ankles."

"Amidst all this vanity and frigidity of manners, by contrast, my mind runs back to that primitive land of hills and mountains, which are not yet so corrupt and debased as the lowlands of India. In those strongholds of nature live those simple but charming and natural people who act because they feel. A truant boy, I remember full well, how I used to shake off any superiority of descent or title, and play with those simple-minded peasant boys and girls Even grown in years, their poor cottage used to be my frequent resort—their simple hospitality used to be most acceptable to me, and many charming girls unaware of their beauty fed me and tended me as their most pleasant guest. Even at the distance of such wide space and long time, I feel surprised how in breach of all etiquette, and refined manners and conventions, I used to leave my home and go to these hilly resorts. I remember distinctly, mention being made to father of my extraordinary habits, but

he did not appear to care about it. Perhaps he divined my nature—somehow I was an exception to the general rule. Boys were never allowed to leave their homes without a servant to accompany them, even when going to their school—but no such restraint was imposed upon me. In the society of elders I was the most well-behaved when it suited me. But when a child, I was the most licentious fellow with all who loved me; the most curious, sharp and observant even to fault. Later, I seem to have led a double life, one in my own circle and another in the freedom of nature, where my soul breathed free unrestricted and unrestrained with pretty admirers around me. Still later, I now think this trait had been fatal to my votaries. Cautious myself even to a fault I have not been able to inspire the same care and caution in others. My careless habits, my disregard of conventions and overfrankness have been unfortunately inspiring several with devotion and I am sorry to say more than devotion which I did not or could not return. Why should they have passed beyond the limits of admiration, I do not see. I have known it to be so: and its only counteraction is utter disregard however unmeant it may be. If my wild careless manners, which I believe are in part responsible for it, I cannot change: and the following step I know is most heartless, but I am perfectly sensible of it, and especially as it is far from pleasant to me. I remember an experienced, old person, remarking that my careless moods and manners were, though disregarding, just the sort of ways which were most engaging. That is rather unfortunate for I should have thought them utterly disengaging and if every one were of my mind, they will almost show utter want of care for such a fellow. Anyhow we are what we are—and education or prudence cannot outrival nature nor can any amount of rouge and powder rival the bloom of a simple maid."[1]

Fazl-i-Husain, however, did not fail to be impressed by the material greatness of the late Victorian era. The grandeur of Victorian England did not charm him, but impressed him

[1] Diary—June 8, 1900.

with awe and fear of England's might. He was in England from 1898 to 1901, and this period followed the Diamond Jubilees of 1897 when the peculiar Victorian 'fin de siècle' was at its highest. The Nineties was the most wonderful decade of a most wonderful century. The sensation of breaking all records was at its zenith. The Jubilee was symbolic, for England was also engaged in record breaking. She held the record for Empire, for wealth, for commerce, for sea-power, for the size of her metropolis and for social prosperity. Economically England dominated world markets, and financially the credit of England was unquestionable. In the life of the Nineties the vision of Empire loomed large. Kipling talked of foreigners as the "Lesser breeds without the law". The cry "Colonies are a millstone round our necks" was dead and forgotten, and instead Seeley harangued at Cambridge about the "Expansion of the British Empire". Overwhelmed with the majesty of this Empire, Fazl-i-Husain observed: "Affluence and abundance characterised the lucky reign of a lucky queen, who ascended the throne when in her teens, and with her age the nation went on progressing, and within half a century it reached if not to just about the zenith of national supremacy. It was half a century and the most wonderful of those which have been recorded in the pages of the history of our world."[1]

Such a view of the ruling nation could not but make Fazl-i-Husain feel overawed, and return to India—a country incapable of challenging the mighty Empire over which the sun never set—with feelings of depression and he wrote:—"The higher objects of a public life of striving and struggling for what does not appear to be ever possible, no ray of hope can ever penetrate the gloom of my thoughts in this department. Hobbe's theory is the most accurate description of what has happened."[2] The British Leviathan stood supreme and unconquerable. An appreciation of these deep impressions on the mind of young Fazl-i-Husain is important in that they materially influenced his political views and methods. Throughout his

[1] Diary—October 6, 1900.
[2] Diary—August 25, 1900.

life he never thought it possible to overthrow the British in India by force. When in 1920 his countrymen decided to challenge British authority in India with unconstitutional agitation, he was so convinced of the invincibility of British arms that he regarded the attempt abortive and harmful, more or less in the same way as Sir Syed Ahmad regarded the Mutiny of 1857. He believed that until the British weaken in Europe the use of force in India was unthinkable.

## CHAPTER III

## *SIALKOT 1901-1905*

AT the time of Fazl-i-Husain's return to India, his father was a District Judge at Peshawar. As soon as the festivities of home-coming were over, Fazl-i-Husain prepared himself to start practice as a lawyer. With the assistance of Mian (later Justice) Shah Din, a friend of Mian Husain Bakhsh, he was enrolled at the Punjab Chief Court, and decided to establish himself as a barrister at Peshawar, but he was constrained to write:—

"My certificates came and a note saying that the Honourable Judges consider it highly inadvisable that I should practise in my father's court. It was not unfair, but harsh and annoying if not insulting. I wrote back, I meant to do so, and thanked the Honourable Judges for their advice on this point of etiquette The Registrar did not like this independence of spirit, and I believe took exception to it, writing back that the Honourable Judges consider it very inadvisable that I should practise at Peshawar while my father is a District Judge there. I had to find myself another station. After serious consideration my choice fell upon Sialkot."[1]

On the evening of the 29th September, 1901, Fazl-i-Husain arrived at Sialkot and settled in a house on Kutchery Road. His first impressions of the possibilities of a legal career at Sialkot were somewhat mixed: "Sialkot", he wrote, "is famous for its fine climate. I was told that there are no good legal practitioners here and that a Muslim is especially wanted. Sheikh Abdul Qadir[2] was of this opinion, and I

[1] Diary—undated September, 1901.

[2] He renewed his friendship of student days with Sheikh (later Sir) Abdul Qadir and this friendship lasted till his death. Abdul Qadir was Editor of *The Punjab Observer* (1898-1904).

think he was right. Again, a good many officials are of my father's acquaintance. But there is one real drawback —the fees are deplorably low. The best practitioner makes only Rs. 500 a month and one can hardly do with less than Rs. 200 a month."[1] Several persons told him that the profession was overcrowded, and if he had come some fifteen years earlier he might have had some sort of success, but now there was not much scope for even the most talented lawyer. A closer scrutiny revealed still more depressing prospects: "The only profession", he observed, "in which one can do as little as possible without any fear of consequences is Government service. The Bar on the contrary, offers a field for work where integrity, perseverance, good behaviour, in fact all that is good and noble is called into play. However, the Punjab Bar appears to be an exception to the general rule. Where shall the new Barrister start? Of course, climatic superiority tells in favour of a district, and the geographical site, railway connections, etc. are not negligible items. The next point is the amount of work, the status of the profession, the society and so forth, and lastly, the amount of friendship or acquaintance with the people and the officials. In Sialkot, the second point is sadly lacking. It is a poor district and is surrounded by poor districts, and the work in consequence is far from lucrative. Fees are terribly low, and the legal practitioners are in a sad plight lacking in professional delicacy of feeling towards each other. Now, I might have changed my headquarters. Delhi, I believe, is a nice place. Members of the Bars are respected, and after all Delhi has been for centuries the capital of India. I would have won fame quickly because of the Associations which are ready to acknowledge merit. However, now I am here at least for sometime just to get into the way of working—just to learn how to start cases and how to conduct them—it will be my apprenticeship."[2]

There were also other features of life at Sialkot which Fazl-i-Husain found irksome to his sense of decency and self-respect, but he accepted them all with a certain degree

[1] Diary—undated: "I come to Sialkot."

[2] Diary—October 3, 1901.

of resignation, though not without a determination to rise above the sordid life that surrounded him. "Ruling", he wrote, "is a passion of human nature and finds full development in the official ranks of the British Government. To bully people is the alphabet of the Executive and the Judiciary. Nothing like it—say these despots. The whole society is rotten to the core, favouritism is rampant, menialism is the code prevalent now. Every two-penny, half-penny official considers himself entitled to respect and honour from all his subordinates and from those who are not Government servants. And if their wishes are not complied with they do not hesitate to abuse their powers in order to show that they are worth something. A Chaprassi will not report your visit, and an orderly will not get a chair for you, a Munshi will evade giving a date, and so on. This wholesale corruption and rottenness is due to the fabric of society having melted away. Honesty is a chimera, fair dealing is unheard of. It is an awful pain to live here, and still, I believe, I have to put up with it."[1]

Of the Sialkot Bar he wrote: "It will indeed be difficult to imagine a Bar worse than the Sialkot Bar. The enormous number of Mukhtars, the lack of ability of Barristers and the greed of Pleaders have rendered the Sialkot Bar a thoroughly bad one, and such as one would rather not join. Today they were discussing a scandal of which any institution, however corrupt and mean, should be ashamed of. Some one, most likely a legal practitioner, had joined hands with some Police Officer, and in his private confidential diary gave the names of certain practitioners, their touts and their rates. This leaked out, or what I believe, was made to leak out, and in consequence those whose names were mentioned therein were simply furious. When discussing the matter their language was most abominable. I wish I had a better Bar, but what can I do?"[2]

Fazl-i-Husain found a solution. "True happiness", he wrote, "one must believe, lies in the realization of human superiority and then in grappling with the serious

[1] Diary—October 4, 1901.
[2] Diary—November 8, 1901.

problems of life...Fix your standard on a low level and you are safe from all the severe blasts and hurricanes that sweep upon the ridges and mountains. I feel, however, that there is a peculiar pleasure in facing those chilly winds."[1] With this belief he carefully studied the officials, the lawyers and the public men around him. In this he was helped by his extraordinary flair for estimating the worth of every individual he came across. His judgement of character was profoundly accurate and he rarely felt the necessity of revising his first opinion of men. Although he judged them by strict moral standards he accepted them as they were. This enabled him to draw round himself before long a large circle of admiring and faithful friends. He realised the weakness and the strength of each one of them, and treated them accordingly.

Fazl-i-Husain made a little progress at the Bar and this made some of his envious colleagues attempt to put obstacles in his way by raising the communal question. When on the occasion of the transfer of Maulvi Inam Ali, the Divisional Judge, Fazl-i-Husain wrote an account in the *Observer* of a "Farewell meeting to a popular Judge," the *Tribune* promptly published an article criticising Maulvi Inam Ali for favouritism and insinuated that he had certain connections with the Muslims of Sialkot which necessitated his transfer in the interests of justice. When a section of the Bar, a majority of whom were Hindus, refused to participate in the farewell party to Maulvi Inam Ali, it appeared as if the insinuations had been confirmed.[2]

Before long Fazl-i-Husain had another unhappy experience of communal opposition. A Sialkot Gradutes' Union was formed to hold weekly meetings, where members were to give lectures on topics of common interest. Fazl-i-Husain recorded in his diary: "In the evening there was a meeting of the Graduates' Union under the presidency of Mr. Waugh. There these Hindu chaps showed their animosity against me by obstinately excluding me from

[1] Diary—November 9, 1901.
[2] Diary—November 1, 1901.

the Sub-Committee formed for framing Rules and Regulations. As they are determined to neglect merit, nay even to insult it, I do not think I will have anything to do with it, though it is by no means a bad plan, and if properly managed could become an institution of considerable power."[1]

He described the next meeting as follows:—"A meeting of the Graduates' Union was held this evening at 6 p.m. under the presidency of Mr. Waugh...They read the rules of the Sub-Committee. I criticised every rule, quite heedless of Diwan Chand, Extra Assistant Commissioner, the result being that I was elected to the Sub-Committee. Mr. Waugh held a conversation with me, and Diwan Chand liked to have a talk with me and arranged to hold a meeting of the Sub-Committee in my house." During the next two months he attended most of the meetings of the Union, but communalism, rivalries and jealousies of all concerned disgusted him and he resigned from the Union in despair.

With three cases in his first month all of which he won Fazl-i-Husain began well as a lawyer, and could be hopeful about his future. This early success, however, did not continue long, and the doubts and fears of a plodding junior assailed him. "I went to Gurdaspur," he wrote, "in Batala, and in fact everywhere people look down upon the legal profession, and what is worse its future is very dark, in fact it has no future. This is indeed very alarming to me, and the remarks made by the people are almost sickening. They are impertinent enough to tell me that I am making a mistake in not getting some employment, but what employment on earth can I get? The sad fact that the legal profession has no future has certainly distressed me a good deal, but what can I do is the question. There is one chance and one chance only, i.e., in the Provincial Civil Service. If a vacancy occurs amongst Muhammadans I have a fair chance of getting the appointment. But will it fall vacant? There are three Provincial Civilians and it will be years before they retire. What can I do but wait and wait patiently. There is nothing else that I can do.

[1] Diary—October 6, 1901.

Extra Assistant Commissionership is quite hopeless. How am I to get it? By competition—I should not, though I can score off easily. More than once have I thought of appealing to Colonel Deane, the Chief Commissioner of N.W.F. Province so that under his auspices I should get a good post. I do not know whether it is in his power to get me a post. I mean to pay him a visit and tell him what I can do and why I want to leave off my practice, and just to let him know that I fully understand the principles of Personal Government and that if entrusted with it hope to do credit to the Benefactor who gets me such a good responsible post. If he cannot do anything, I must stick to law through thick and thin, and wait for Provincial Civil Service, and if even that fails, I must drudge on with law and do my best to work up a practice for myself. The decrees of God cannot be averted by us and it is no use worrying when the case lies beyond our efforts."[1]

Another month passed without any startling success, and his difficulties multiplied when his Munshi's daughter died of plague and he was obliged to leave service.[2] Mangal Sain, his successor, required close watching because he was known to supply cases to a leading Muslim lawyer of Sialkot. After about three months Fazl-i-Husain renewed his efforts to find employment. Besides, Sialkot was severely affected by the plague epidemic of 1902. Plague raged furiously in all the central districts of the Punjab, and it almost caused Fazl-i-Husain to change the whole course of his life.

"My father", he wrote, "wants me to leave Sialkot for some other station (1) because of the plague and (2) because the work here is not particularly remunerative. It is true that I am no brilliant success here—my work here is indifferent. But then I don't believe a fresher could conquer with the first rush. Fees here are deplorable, but then that is more or less true of all places. Where could I go? Gurdaspur is distinctly bad—no society, no cantonment, nothing. Shahpur—I don't like the place. Multan

[1] Diary—December 15, 1901.

[2] Diary—December 16, 1901.

is already overcrowded. So far as work is concerned I don't think it is any use changing the station except for Peshawar. As for the plague—it requires consideration. Sooner or later plague is going to be all over the Punjab. As for leaving the station for a week or so—there is no hope of its decreasing within such a short time, in fact the worst of it is supposed to come in March and April. For the present, I think I should continue where I am, till I hear from Major Inglis. I hope I will hear from him before long, and then I will apply for enrolment and leave for Peshawar directly. I have as much chance of making a name in the Frontier Province as in the Punjab; and at all events more chance of making money. If my income rises to Rs. 1,000 a month I will be thoroughly satisfied. I will wait till I see which way the wind blows. Oh! how I wish this plague were over at least in the Sialkot city, so that we could live without perpetual dread which is becoming intolerable."[1]

Towards the close of 1902, Fazl-i-Husain found himself reconciled to his surroundings, and was making good progress in his profession. Mr. H. P. (later Justice) Maude, the new Divisional Judge, was much impressed by his integrity and ability and helped him in several matters.[2] Lieutenant Colonel Roberts, the Cantonment Magistrate, liked him for the cogency of his arguments, and for his brevity in Court. Two cases helped to increase his popularity. One of these related to the elopement of a Hindu girl with a Muslim youth called Faujdar. The guardians of the girl alleged abduction, while Faujdar pleaded that she had voluntarily come to him. The case assumed a communal complexion and the leading Muslims and Hindus of Sialkot volunteered assistance to their co-religionists. Ganga Ram, the Magistrate, wanted to try Faujdar for abduction and to take security proceedings against his party, but as this meant not only the immediate restoration of the girl but also great hardship for some leading Muslims who had stood sureties for Faujdar, Fazl-i-Husain undertook to defend the case free of charge,

[1] Diary—February 2, 1902.
[2] Diary—February 6, 1902.

prevailed upon the Magistrate to take security proceedings against both parties, and when Faujdar was sentenced to three years' rigorous imprisonment, he went to the Chief Court in appeal and got him acquitted. This success of Fazl-i-Husain caused a sensation in Sialkot, and before it had faded from public memory another case brought him further popularity. Since apostasy operates in Muslim law as an immediate dissolution of marriage, a Muslim woman desirous of divorcing her husband, for which at the time there was no legal provision, had no alternative except to embrace Christianity or Hinduism. As such conversions were regarded as prejudicial to Muslim society, Fazl-i-Husain undertook to conduct the case of one Iman Din against his wife, Husain Bibi, who had become a Christian in order to marry one Roshan Din. The Chief Court gave a verdict against Iman Din, but while Christian missionaries made much of the judgment in their favour the Muslims hailed Fazl-i-Husain as their champion against the onslaughts of Christianity.

The secret of Fazl-i-Husain's success, however, lay in the deep-seated purpose in life which inspired him. Underneath his temporary depressions and feelings of despondency he conceived of life as a purposeful activity which should not be allowed to be changed by the turbid course of multifarious currents of every day worldly affairs. He regularly got up at four in the morning, and by the time he went to attend Court he had put in five hours' work. With the exception of a few hours in the afternon given up to tennis, or riding, or seeing friends, he spent the rest of the day in work or study, often working far into the night. He kept himself intellectually alive, and was always well informed about political affairs. He was a member of the Montgomery Library, and read, apart from political, historical and philosophical works, most of the current newspapers and periodicals. He contributed frequently to the *Observer*. An article *Masterly Inactivity in Politics*, for instance, caused considerable uneasiness in official circles.[1] Once, when his friend Sheikh (later Sir) Abdul

[1] Diary—October 23, 1901.

Qadir, editor of the *Observer*, was away at Calcutta, Fazl-i-Husain worked as editor and wrote editorials on educational reform and other topics.[1] He also contributed to *Makhzam*, at the time the only literary magazine in Urdu, serious articles on education, social reform, and philosophy. He attended various public lectures at the Scottish Mission College and also delivered several lectures himself to the literary society of the College.

One aspect of his character which helped him both socially and professionally was his habit of self-reliance. He disliked being in debt, financially or otherwise, to anyone.[2] In London he had refused to accept free board and lodging even for a night from Hyams, his landlord. He was extremely pleased when within about six months of his starting in practice, he was able to support himself, and dispense with financial assistance from his father. He preferred to put up with inconvenience rather than borrow money from anyone.[3] In professional life he was equally scrupulous, and never asked for help from any one as that would have been a sign of weakness, for him an unforgivable sin. He would have much rather added to his work than sought the help of a fellow lawyer. With this self-reliance he combined a degree of conscientiousness which inspired confidence in his clients, and led them to rely implicitly on his advice; all the more so because whenever he found that a case was weak and there was no hope of success, he used to tell his clients plainly and frankly not to waste their time and money.

When he had settled down at Sialkot and the newness of his work and his environment had worn off, he thought of his wife. He had been married for six years but up till now his wife had hardly existed for him. He had not written to her except once from England to tell her of his safe arrival. She had all this time lived with his parents. He now asked her to come and live with him and to make his home comfortable. Soon afterwards he helped his father by taking over the responsibility of bringing up his four

[1] Diary—December 22, 1901.
[2] Diary—October 18, 1901.
[3] Diary—December 22, 1901.

step-brothers and educating them. These duties he took over more or less permanently, because after the death of his father in 1910 he continued to take care of them till they were all except the youngest married and settled in life.

Within a few months of his starting in practice, Fazl-i-Husain was thinking of a political future, and wrote: "I had a letter from Ghulam Bhik. I will attach him to myself, and with the help of a few more colleagues establish a policy of my own and soon install myself their leader. These chaps want initiative and with God's help I will supply that. If I only succeed in working up a good practice here, saving some money, say Rs. 5,000, and then going to Lahore and establishing myself there and getting a good practice in the Chief Court and other courts and to establish my School of Politics and Lecturing and achieving National Leadership. If I win honours and gather up money as old Rattigan did, I may one day move to London and try my luck there. All the time I have made up my mind to keep myself in contact with politics. I will be always up-to-date, read as much as I can and think more. My ambition is to be the recognized leader of the Indian Musalmans..."[1]

The state of the Muslim community of Sialkot was very unsatisfactory. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of the Ahmadya sect, was at the height of his popularity, and divided Muslims into two warring groups. The growing schism between orthodox Muslims and Ahmadis found expression in a dispute over the management of the local Idgah used for Friday and Id prayers. Hakim Mir Hissam-ud-Din, *Mutwalli* of the mosque, was very unpopular because of his Ahmadi inclinations and matters came to a head when he prohibited non-Ahmadis from coming to the mosque for prayers. This caused intense resentment among Muslims; Mir Hissam-ud-Din, apprehensive of a breach of the peace, reported the matter to the police. The Deputy Commissioner attached the property of the mosque and ordered that the party claiming it should institute a

[1] Diary—November 12, 1901.

civil suit. Fazl-i-Husain apprehended that a civil suit would mean expense and further widen the gulf between the two parties. He brought persuasion to bear on all concerned, and was successful in bringing out a compromise whereby status quo was restored. A little later, Fazl-i-Husain impressed upon the Muslims of Sialkot the necessity of a Muslim organization which should deal with such matters as they arose. The foundation of a local Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam was thus laid. The Idgah continued to be managed by Mir Hissam-ud-Din but in future he was to be responsible for its management to the newly created Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam. Fazl-i-Husain had, thus, very tactfully, managed to transfer the management of the Idgah from the hands of an individual to an organized body representing the Muslims as a whole. As the Anjuman gathered strength Mir Hissam-ud-Din lost in importance, and within a few years Sialkot Muslims found themselves united and free from dissensions and bickerings. Before long the Anjuman was able to start a High School of its own, and later it set up a large number of primary schools all over the town. Fazl-i-Husain then drew the pointed attention of the Anjuman to the necessity of looking after and educating orphans. In 1903, assisted by the Anjuman, he founded a *Madrassa-tul-Quran* to bring up orphans and to educate them. He contributed liberally towards its foundation, and presented a large number of books to its library.

Within six months of his start Fazl-i-Husain built up a practice of about Rs. 300 per month, which he gradually raised to about Rs. 400 or Rs. 500. He maintained it at this level throughout 1903-04. He lived frugally, and accumulated a few thousand rupees. He had planned in 1901 to save some money and go to Lahore to struggle for a better income at the Bar and to "achieve National Leadership". Therefore, in 1905, he decided to leave Sialkot, though it meant risking the loss of all he had hitherto achieved in his profession. Later he said: "the risk had to be taken," as he was finding district life too limited and narrow for his activities.

## CHAPTER IV

## *LAHORE 1905-1920*

FOUR years as a practising lawyer at Sialkot gave Fazl-i-Husain some prominence, particularly among the Muslims of the district, but outside he was unknown except in circles connected with the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam of Lahore. Early in 1905 he moved to Lahore. Success at the Bar in Lahore did not come as a matter of good fortune, but was the result of hard work, perseverance, ability and integrity. During the first year or so he was confronted with all the difficulties of an unknown junior at the Bar, and during moments of depression he again thought of applying for service; at one time he seriously entertained the idea of becoming a public prosecutor. As time passed however and the fruits of his labour became apparent, his misgivings gave way to an unbounded enthusiasm for his profession. He became deeply interested in the administration of law and studied carefully its minutest details.

Professionally a good opportunity arose with the beginning of serious sedition in the Punjab. In 1907, with a view to amending the Colonization Act so as to enhance the water rates on the Upper Bari Doab Canal, the Punjab Government passed the Colony Bill. Lyallpur District, the one chiefly affected, had been colonized primarily by Sikh cultivators, a number of whom were old soldiers from the Central districts of the Punjab. They had been given land on very favourable terms and had risen in a few years to affluence hitherto unknown in the Punjab. The new Bill, the colonists felt, would soon deprive them of their reward. Political leaders roused angry passions in Lyallpur, from where discontent spread to the home districts of the

colonists. The visit of Gokhale encouraged the agitation still further, and resulted in riots at Lahore and Rawalpindi. Fazl i-Husain took no active part in these happenings, but he was closely associated with some who did. He had acquired a reputation for independence and strength of character, and the politicians chose him as their counsel. While C. R. Das defended the seditious editor of *Bande Mataram* and young terrorists in Bengal, Fazl-i-Husain defended the rising politicians of the Punjab. At a time when governmental disfavour was feared and politicians were easily deserted by their friends he fearlessly stood by those who, he felt, were persecuted for their political views. He worked hard and earnestly, and justified his choice.

In 1909, the anti-Government movement reappeared in the form of a flood of seditious literature. Government decided to put an end to the "literary conspiracy", and the houses of all the suspects were searched, including Bhai Parmanand, at the time a professor of History in D.A.V. College, Lahore. As a result of the search it was alleged that incriminating correspondence and a manual for the manufacture of bombs was found in his house. The reputation of Fazl-i-Husain for conducting political cases stood high and he was engaged by Bhai Parmanand.[1] He pleaded fearlessly and succeeded in getting his client off with a security bond for good behaviour. Five years later, in the Delhi-Lahore Conspiracy Case, Fazl-i-Husain again defended Bhai Parmanand. In 1919 he defended several important political cases arising from the Punjab Disturbances. Apart from the prominence such cases gave him in public life, ten years' intimate knowledge of terrorism and political conspiracies made Fazl-i-Husain acutely critical of romantic tendencies in political methods.

His close associations with what was regarded as the seditious world naturally raised suspicions in the minds of the Punjab authorities. In 1915, he along with some friends, founded the "Jahangir Club", to meet every Sunday at Jahangir's tomb and to enjoy the holiday in peace from the worry and turmoil of professional life. The

[1] N. B. Sen: *Punjab's Eminent Hindus*, 1943, p. 110.

C.I.D., however, felt suspicious and saw in the activities of the "Jahangir Club" a conspiracy to secure the aid of the Amir of Afghanistan to overthrow British rule in India. The authorities were still more intrigued when in reply to the inquiries of the Chief Secretary about the names of the members of the club Fazl-i-Husain replied: "It is a secret organisation and members do not know each other's names!"

Fazl-i-Husain concentrated on the Chief Court Bar. He got on well, better than any junior of his time. He was well thought of by the Judges, and his ability, his zeal and his industry won him the confidence of his clients. His rise was more rapid than he had anticipated. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, writing about him observed: "When I came to Lahore as Lt. Governor in 1913 Mian Fazl-i-Husain had already made a name for himself at the Bar and was also a provincial figure in politics as a member of the newly formed Muslim League. He and the late Sir Muhammad Shafi were the chief public men in the community both on the public platform and in the Legislative Council."[1] At this stage, Fazl-i-Husain placed professional work first, educational work second, and political work third, but his activities outside his professional work made him known to the public at large and indirectly expanded the growing circle of his clients. He established an excellent practice, his income being not less than that of a High Court Judge and nearer to that of the Chief Justice. He was a popular and an important member of the Bar Association, and almost certain to be elected its President after Mian Muhammad Shafi. Having thus achieved success at the Bar, he began in 1915 to take an active part in the political life of the province.

In July 1918 Mr. Justice Shah Din died, and the vacancy left on the Bench had to be filled by a Muslim. After Mian Muhammad Shafi, who had declined the offer, Fazl-i-Husain was the foremost among the senior Muslim Barristers in the Province. Public opinion was strongly in favour of his elevation to the Bench, and almost regarded

[1] Note written for this book by Sir Michael O'Dwyer, 1938.

it as a foregone conclusion. The *Tribune* asserted that "surely Government cannot be unaware that, for one, the Hon'ble Mr. Fazl-i-Husain's name has been on every one's lips ever since the vacancy was created,"[1] and the *Observer*[2] regarded his claims irrefutable. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, however, thought otherwise. He came into close touch with Fazl-i-Husain in 1916 when the latter became a member of the Legislative Council, and disapproved of his bold and fearless criticism of the policy of Government with regard to education, local bodies, preservation of law and order, and the introduction of reforms. The presidential address of Fazl-i-Husain at the Fifth Punjab Provincial Conference in 1917 was described by Sir Michael as "pure sedition", and the phrase "insolent bureaucracy" was especially resented by him. At the Sixth Provincial Conference in 1918, Lala Duni Chand, in his presidential address, strongly criticized Sir Michael for his repressive policy and suggested that the Governors under the new Constitution should be chosen from men in public life because it was impossible to think of Sir Michael (an I.C.S. Officer) as a Governor. Sir Michael was misinformed, and believed that the address had been drafted by Fazl-i-Husain, and he felt personally insulted. Similarly, Sir Michael was again misled into believing that Fazl-i-Husain had been instrumental in the appointment of Malik Barkat Ali as editor of the *Observer* against the wishes of the Governor. Sir Michael, decided not to elevate Fazl-i-Husain to the Bench. The *Observer* commented: "It appears that the Government of this province brooks no criticism of even that moderate and well-balanced description that is always associated with the name of Mr. Fazl-i-Husain and his politics."[3] The *Tribune* said: "If Mr. Fazl-i-Husain is not appointed, the public will naturally want to know the reason why, and in the absence of another and a more satisfactory explanation, it would have no choice but to accept the explanation that has been offered by the *Observer*. To import a man from outside with all the

[1] August 9, 1918.
[2] August 17, 1918.
[3] August 10, 1918.

incidental disadvantages of such a course, would be a proceeding that would need the strongest grounds to justify it, and we can think of no such grounds even if there is one single man in the province who is capable of discharging and is willing to discharge the responsible duties of a Judge and is otherwise free from disqualification. Is not Mr. Fazl-i-Husain such a man?"[1] Sir Michael O'Dwyer, however, appointed Abdur Rauf from the United Provinces. Fazl-i-Husain regarded this incident as inevitable in the ups and downs of political life. In some quarters there was genune satisfaction at what others regarded a disappointment. The *Vakil* (Amritsar) had already written that "If the choice falls on Mian Fazl-i-Husain, he will probably not decline the offer. If this comes to pass the political movement in the Punjab will once again become leaderless."[2] The *Aftab* (Lahore) had expressed the same view: "Some leading men are of the opinion that Khan Bahadur Fazl-i-Husain should not give up serving his country and nation, and should refuse the post if it is offered to him."[3] In political circles it was felt that the disappearance of Fazl-i-Husain from the political life of the province would cause a set back to the political progress of the Punjab, and from this point of view welcomed the decision of the Governor. Fazl-i-Husain continued to take an active part in politics, and in the following year when Mian Muhammad Shafi went to Delhi as a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council he succeeded him as President of the High Court Bar Association.

It will be useful at this point to refer to Fazl-i-Husain's father, whose outlook and interests were in many ways similar to his own. On retirement from Government service in 1904, Mian Husain Bakhsh settled down in his ancestral house at Batala and devoted the remaining six years of his life to the service of his community. He was deeply interested in organizing the Muslims and in promoting education. He was a prominent and an active member of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam of Lahore.

[1] August 14, 1918.
[2] July 17, 1918.
[3] July 31, 1918.

He gave handsome donations, much beyond his means, and always acted as peacemaker between rival sections of the Anjuman. He founded Anjumans and under their auspices Islamia Schools were opened at Peshawar, Dera Ismail Khan, Abbottabad, Kohat and Batala. He rejected the offer of being made an Honorary Magistrate and devoted himself to public work. He was completely free from bigotry or religious obscurantism, and looked for guidance not to dogmas but to the basic principles laid down in the Quran. On 1st August, 1910, at the age of sixty-four he died of cholera and his remains were taken to Batala and consigned to the family graveyard.[1]

Fazl-i-Husain, like his father, was very interested in education. He regarded it as the *sine qua non* of social, economic and political progress. He shared his desire to spread education among his countrymen with some of India's foremost political leaders. Sir Syed Ahmad had founded the Aligarh College and spent the greater part of his life in promoting education. Tilak was a lecturer and the founder of the Deccan Education Society. Gokhale began as a school teacher and made education an important item in the programme of the Servants of India Society. Surendra Nath Banerji began as a Professor and said: "Political work is more or less ephemeral, that is short-lived—though none the less highly useful. But educational work has in it the character of permanent utility." In the same way, Fazl-i-Husain on his return from England in 1901 interested himself in educational work. When he moved from Sialkot to Lahore in 1905, he put himself in close touch with the Punjab University, the Education Department, and the educational work of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam.

He had hardly been a year in Lahore when Bell, his former teacher, now Director of Public Instruction, recommended his nomination by Government as a member of the Punjab Text Book Committee. On his appointment, he took great interest in the varied activities of the Com-

[1] On this occasion Dr. Iqbal dedicated a poem to Fazl-i-Husain called *Failsafa-e-Gham*, later published in *Bang-e-Dara*.

mittee. He was not only very regular in attending its meetings, but was always willing to let his wide knowledge be made use of on Urdu, Arabic, and Persian Literary Sub-Committees. He was almost an indispensable member of the Special Budget and Publishing Sub-Committees. He continued to be a member of the Punjab Text Book Committee for almost a decade.

In the Punjab University the activities of Fazl-i-Husain were numerous. In 1908 he was nominated Fellow of the Punjab University and was assigned to the Arts', Oriental and Law Faculties. He was elected Secretary of the Oriental Faculty in 1913 and of the Law Faculty in 1915, and continued to act in this capacity till he became Minister of Education in 1922. He was also interested in the general administration of the University, and was elected by the Faculty of Oriental Learning as a member of the Syndicate. For several years he served as moderator for examinations, and this gave him sufficient experience to be able to make useful contributions to multitudinous Sub-Committees of the Senate and the Syndicate—the Examination Committee, University Lectureship Committee, Scholarships' Committee, Indian Students' Abroad Committee, Calcutta University Commission Report Committee, Public Accounts' Committee, etc. The most important matter in the administration of the University was the question of affiliation of colleges to the University. Before the passing of the Indian Universities' Act of 1904, no system of affiliation existed in the Punjab University. Affiliation became necessary under the Act, and all colleges previously recognised applied for it. Committees of inspection of colleges were appointed to report on the eligibility for affiliation of these institutions. Fazl-i-Husain was selected to serve on the College Inspection Committees for upward of ten years, and served on no less than twenty of them. It was found extremely difficult to adopt standards of efficiency that could be regarded both as universal and permanent, and in the difficulties which arose Fazl-i-Husain helped both the colleges and the University with concrete suggestions for

improvements. Several colleges owed their affiliation to his advice and independence of judgment.

As a practising lawyer, his interest in the Law Faculty was both intimate and comprehensive. Apart from being the Secretary of the Law Faculty, he was throughout a member of the Law College Committee and its Secretary for two years. He was also a member of the Board of Studies in Law and acted as Chairman of the Sub-Committee of the Syndicate which examined a proposal for remodelling the Law College. In 1907 he was appointed examiner in Civil Law for the Intermediate and Licentiate Examinations. The following year he was appointed examiner for the LL.B., and he continued to be examiner in Civil, Constitutional, Roman and Muslim Law till 1920.

By this outline of the multifarious duties Fazl-i-Husain performed as a Fellow of the Punjab University it is not intended to indicate any extraordinary achievements but to show his deep-seated interest in educational work and the vast experience he gained by personally dealing with the minutest details of every sphere of education. When he became a member of the Punjab Council and later Minister of Education he utilised this experience and the knowledge gained thereby to promote education in his province.

After a careful review of its whole educational policy, the Government of India made a pronouncement in 1904 to the effect that: "On a general view of the question, the Government of India cannot avoid the conclusion that primary education has hitherto received insufficient attention and an inadequate share of public funds. They consider that it possesses a strong claim upon the sympathy of both of the Supreme Government and of the local Governments, and should be made a leading charge upon the provincial revenues; and that in those provinces where it is in a backward condition, its encouragement should be a primary obligation."

This pronouncement had been conveniently ignored by the Punjab Government but as soon as Fazl-i-Husain found an opportunity to stand on the floor of the Punjab Council

in 1916 he proposed that "the condition of the primary schools, and especially of the lower primary department be improved and that further expansion of primary education should take place through the improved schools." Explaining the resolution, he said: "By the term primary schools I mean vernacular schools which almost entirely exist in villages...the first and foremost duty of Government is to impart primary education to such an extent that the percentage of literacy is considerably raised...it is clear that a person who has been through a primary school course should be able to read and write in vernacular, know a little arithmetic and also know what is known as 'general knowledge'...in the primary schools there are about forty or fifty students and as many as five or six classes, and so many subjects to be taught in each class. The work is entrusted to one individual, and that one man has to attend to all the classes and has to teach them all the subjects. I myself was very much surprised when I learnt that. The Hon'ble Members will be further surprised to hear that the wonderful man who is doing all this work is drawing not more than Rs. 15 a month. That is his pay. Now, this wonderful man who is drawing Rs. 15 a month and imparting primary education to fifty odd boys in five different standards and in four or five subjects to each standard, must be really a wonderful man to do this work efficiently...In the year 1911 there were in all about 260,000 students in the primary department. Of these half the number are in the lowest class and the other half is distributed unequally in the four higher standards...I am sorry to notice that the last five years have really made no change at all..." J. A. Ritchie, D.P.I., accepted the resolution and agreed to re-examine the whole structure of the primary educational system, as a result of which Government issued a circular announcing a five year programme aiming at "ultimately the establishment of a vernacular school at every centre where an average attendance of not less than fifty children might be expected, provided that a distance of two miles ordinarily intervened between two Board Schools." In addition the programme included the erec-

tion of economical school buildings and the provision of an adequate number of properly trained teachers. Salaries in the educational services, and particularly of vernacular school teachers, were considerably enhanced by local bodies with generous assistance from Government. Thus, for the first time, an attempt was made on scientific lines to encourage education by liberal grants and to carry out a five year programme with the object of removing illiteracy; and also to equalize as far as possible the measure of Government assistance between progressive, and backward areas by a system of grading each district in accordance with its financial position and its capacity for self-help.[1]

This, however, was not enough, for Fazl-i-Husain felt that not only provision of facilities but also persuasion was required to overcome the prevailing apathy and to produce quick and satisfactory results. He supported Gokhale's Primary Education Bill of 1911, but in view of the insuperable administrative difficulties in enforcing universal compulsion in a backward province like the Punjab, he suggested the introduction of compulsion under local option. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, summarizing the educational work of Fazl-i-Husain before 1920 wrote: "His industry and great ability made him a most valuable member of the Education Select Committee, and his advice and knowledge were of enormous value in framing and carrying through the Bill for Compulsory Primary Education in 1918-19. That Bill, the first of its kind in India, was based on local option of the Municipal and District Boards concerned, and its successful passage was mainly due to two men, Sir Fazl-i-Husain and Mr. Ritchie, the D.P.I. It paved the way for the great development of primary education in later years when Sir Fazl-i-Husain was Minister of Education, and the Punjab—especially the rural Punjab—is under a very deep obligation to him for that remarkable achievement."[2]

Fazl-i-Husain realized, and wanted Government to realise as well that efficient and well paid teachers are essential

[1] Punjab Administration Report, 1921-22, p. 104.

[2] Note written by Sir Michael O'Dwyer for this book, 1938.

to all efforts at spreading education. Hitherto the staff had been to a great extent inefficient because the educational service was the lowest paid service, and it only attracted those who failed to get a livelihood elsewhere. Moreover, when they became teachers they could not maintain a standard of life befitting their profession. This was particularly true of teachers of classical languages. He told the Council how a very large number of well qualified teachers started on Rs. 10 per month and their salary did not increase by more than eight annas every year with the result that they were looked down upon by other teachers and were not able to hold their own in the schools. The only way, he added, of improving their status and efficiency was to substantially increase their pay. Government saw the cogency of the argument and agreed to include them in a scheme for a Provincial Educational Service.

Fazl-i-Husain continued to ceaselessly agitate for various improvements in the educational system. Since the curriculum of primary schools had been reduced from five to four years, he asked for the expansion of Vernacular Middle Schools. He suggested the extention of the Central Training College and the foundation of another training college and several normal schools to provide additional trained teachers for the expansion of secondary and primary education. He urged that the University should undertake training and should become more of a residential University than merely an examining body. He wanted the foundation of an Industrial School and a Commercial College to assist industrial development of the province. Finally, he demanded that education should be encouraged in backward tracts such as the South-West Punjab districts of Jhang, Multan and Muzaffargarh.

Fazl-i-Husain, as a lecturer and one who had been intimately connected with education for fifteen years found the teaching of vernacular languages sadly neglected. As a member of the Senate he successfully urgea the University to sanction large sums of money for the encouragement of vernacular education. In the Legislative Council he pro-

posed that an enquiry be made into the teaching and study of vernaculars in schools. In support of his resolution, he said: "The term *vernacular* does not mean Urdu only, it stands for Urdu, Punjabi and Hindi...the importance of having a good and sound foundation in education as in construction of buildings cannot be over-estimated...If pupils possess a good knowledge of their vernacular, they are very likely to acquire a good knowledge of other languages, including English, more rapidly, and it seems to me that having once become possessed of a vehicle of thought they will be in a position to import and export ideas more efficiently and economically...It stands to reason that an ignorant citizen is an economic loss to his country and the Government, and it is in the interest of the country and its Government that the youthful citizens receive adequate education, develop the necessary wish to live well, and in consequence learn to exert themselves to secure the wherewithal of a healthy comfortable life. Education and education alone, can create that divine discontent which leads to the economic efficiency of the citizen, and eventually enables the country to take its proper place in the civilized world...In order to determine the position which the vernaculars should occupy in the scheme of studies in Anglo-Vernacular Schools, it should be remembered that the products of these schools are to act as channels for the inflow of western culture and thought, and this is the reason why the Indians want these schools to afford good knowledge of English. Now it seems to me that when our object is that the products of these schools should through the medium of their vernaculars bring western knowledge to the Indian mind, how can any scheme of studies which does not safeguard the achievement of this object be considered suitable? Let me just for a moment try to give you an impression of the knowledge of an average matriculate. He cannot write a fairly accurate letter in his own vernacular, and mistakes of expression and grammar one might have overlooked, but there are howlers of spelling, and the handwriting is something shocking. Very frequently he is not able to mend his own pen; and this is

the man who without any further knowledge of his vernacular is expected to enrich it with all the sciences of the West. I may here remind the Hon'ble Members that the learning and teaching of vernaculars comes to an end with the school course. The case of one who has been reading for his Bachelor's or Master's degree is still more deplorable. He has been for four or six years improving his knowledge of English, and laboriously gathering the store of western knowledge, and by the time he takes his Bachelor's or Master's degree, his knowledge of his vernaculars has, if anything, deteriorated, and the things have come to such a pass that his weakness is in evidence in official records that are prepared by Government officials."[1] The resolution was carried, and a General Educational Conference was summoned to report on the teaching and study of vernaculars. As a result of this Conference, Government decided to give greater encouragement to the study of vernacular. In the Middle Department vernacular was introduced as a medium of instruction, and the Punjab University was asked to adopt it as an alternative to a classical language in the Matriculation.

Fazl-i-Husain believed that socially the Indian people as a whole and the Muslim community in particular were in a deplorable plight. In face of rapid deterioration he regarded their apathy and inactivity as most dangerous. He wanted to create among his countrymen and his Muslim brethren a consciousness of their downfall and also wanted to inspire them to make an effort to rehabilitate themselves. In three lectures he expounded his ideas before the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam of Lahore.[2] These ideas formed the basis of his political and social programme for the rehabilitation of the Indian people in general and more particularly of the Muslim community, and he spent the rest of his life in giving effect to most of them in whatever way he found possible.

[1] Proceedings of the Council—September 2, 1916.

[2] Lectures: *A Message from England* and *Muhammadan Regeneration* or *Muhammadan Self-Government*, were delivered on the 17th, 18th and 19th Anniversaries of the Anjuman-i-Hamayat-i-Islam of Lahore—1902-1904.

"You are Muhammadans," he said, "but you should never forget that you are Indians; I want you to cherish a healthy love of home which can be seen at its best in the English, and at its worst in you. In plaintive tones, the newly educated Indians say, 'There is no one nation in India, there are too many nations.' Let me assure these gentlemen of the new light that unity of race and religion is not absolutely necessary to constitute a nation. Some of them appear to entertain a fantastic and ludicrous idea that 'the Indian nation means Aryanism, and that the conditions precedent tc national regeneration are revival of Aryan religion and Nagri characters.' It is the unity of interest that constitutes a nation, and as long as our interests are identical we are a nation..."

Referring to economic conditions in India he said: "Poverty is the greatest evil on earth, it is the worst of all evils. The community falls an easy victim to famines, because of its excessive poverty. How to release it from the cruel clutches of famine? The true principle I maintain is to nourish home industries, even at the risk of strifling individualism and suffering a trifling loss—why? Because as Greek Theorists had put it—the State comes before the individual. The same idea runs in Akhlaq-i-Nasiri and Akhlaq-i-Jalali. As a deduction therefrom, national prosperity demands individual sacrifice ...The introduction of machinery and of factories is the only cure which can prove an effective restorative to famine-stricken India. The famines, Gentlemen, are more due to want of work than to anything else...but factorisation means large amount of capital plus extraordinary business capacities. Joint-Stock Companies must be created. What state of society is favourable to their constitution and creation? What are the conditions precedent to their growth? There must be an enlightened, interested and active public. But how to get such a public full of life and energy? Education, education, education must be the cry as was raised by John Stuart Mill."

"Our education", he concluded, "being insufficient we have no public opinion—none worth mentioning. In Eng-

land the people evince deep interest in public affairs, and strong public opinion controls those in authority, yes, guides them. The statesman who does not keep his finger upon the pulse of the public cannot be expected to act the Leader. Thus the public constitute the tribunal whence reward as well as censure issue. In India we are not used to this—we look to some other quarter for honours and titles. Gladstone died a Mr. Gladstone, but still the envied one of titled personages. The Great Pitt was worshipped by the people. When insulted by the King, he used to bask in the sunshine of public favour. Our leaders, fearing no public opinion, are unfortunately open to corruption. Leaders qua leaders have to bargain with the Government for the people. Now if the public exercise no vigilant control over their agents it must follow that these agents will find it difficult to battle with temptations. Hence the want of leaders of the true metal..."

Fazl-i-Husain was deeply conscious of the necessity of promoting education among his countrymen generally and among Muslims in particular. In this he picked up the threads of the policy advocated by Sir Syed Ahmad, who believed that the Muslims had failed to avail themselves of the education provided by the British because of their political traditions, social customs, religious beliefs and vanity, and that if they persisted in this attitude they would become still more backward and poor. Fazl-i-Husain resolved, therefore, to make special efforts to promote education among the backward Muslims of the Punjab. When he found that the Punjab University was not paying sufficient attention to the education of Muslims, he pointed out to the University authorities that this was due to lack of adequate Muslim representation in the Syndicate, the Senate, the Faculties and the Boards of Studies. The Muslim standpoint, he declared, was ignored in the laying down of curricula and courses of study; any proposal calculated to improve the lot of the Muslim student, by freeing him from the peculiar disabilities under which he laboured, had little chance of success in the Faculties and Muslims were ignored in appointments to examinerships

because most Boards of Studies were dominated by a hostile majority of the opposite community. Fazl-i-Husain pleaded in vain. When in 1919 Sir Edward Maclagan became Governor, Fazl-i-Husain reiterated his views. Sir Edward later summed up the position by saying "Muslim education in general claimed much of his (Fazl-i-Husain's) attention then and afterwards, and he felt very strongly the comparative feebleness of Muslim representation on the Senate of the University. I may note that the constitution and administration of the University was such that an enquiry by Government with a view to substantial changes was much desired both by myself and by others; but the strong partizanship shown by the leading Hindus on the one side and by the Muslims led by Mian Fazl-i-Husain on the other rendered it impossible to start such an enquiry without rousing evils worse than the disease which the enquiry would have aimed at healing."[1]

Fazl-i-Husain conceived of the possibility of Muslim regeneration primarily through *tanzim* and education. He was, therefore, inevitably drawn into the activities of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam of Lahore, which at that time was after the Muhammadan Educational Conference the most important All-India organization of Muslims. The annual anniversary celebrations were attended by prominent Muslims from all over India. During these celebrations some of the recognized leaders of Muslim public opinion as well as youthful talents of the rising generation addressed the Anjuman. Dr. Iqbal publicly read for the first time one of his poems before the Anjuman. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad also made his first public appearance on the platform of the Anjuman at the age of fifteen and spoke on *The Necessity of Religion.* Fazl-i-Husain, as already mentioned, soon after his return from England on the 17th Anniversary of the Anjuman delivered a lecture called *Message from England.* This and other lectures he delivered subsequently were both in matter and in spirit in conformity with the reform movement led by the elite of the contemporary Muslim intelligentsia.

[1] Note dated November 13, 1937, written by Sir Edward Maclagan for this book.

When in 1905 Fazl-i-Husain came to Lahore permanently, he began to participate actively in the manifold activities of the Anjuman. He became a member of the General Council, and was also elected member of the Managing Committee and Secretary of the College Committee, continuing to discharge the duties of all these offices till 1921, when he was appointed minister of Government. In the educational sphere of the activities of the Anjuman, the most important institution was Islamia College of Lahore, and Fazl-i-Husain as Secretary of the College Committee, was its chief organizing spirit for nearly fifteen years. The building was inadequate for the expanding life of the College. In 1906 Fazl-i-Husain organized a deputation and secured a Government grant of Rs. 50,000 which helped to extend the College building and to construct the Rivaz Hostel. Later, he had the accounts of the College audited, and in 1914 pursuaded Government to give an annual recurring grant of Rs. 30,000.

Fazl-i-Husain also wanted an efficient staff and to set an example he became an honorary part time lecturer, and in 1907-08 in the absence of the principal, acted as an honorary principal of the College. In order to raise the prestige of the College he felt it was necessary to select a capable Principal of repute in the Islamic world. He found such a person in Dr. Abdullah Suhrawardi, the well-known upholder of Pan-Islamic ideas. The appointment of Dr. Suhrawardi benefitted the College, but the new regime of efficiency and the eradication of nepotism caused Dr. Suhrawardi to become unpopular with some members of the Managing Committee, with the result that he soon abandoned the College. When the College relapsed into periodical disorders, Fazl-i-Husain failing to find a suitable Muslim selected Henry Martin, a Lecturer at Aligarh, to become Principal. The appointment of a non-Muslim as Principal required considerable persuasiveness and tactful handling of Muslim public opinion. Henry Martin continued to be Principal as long as Fazl-i-Husain was Secretary of the College Committee, and not only improved the enrolment from ninetynine in 1910 to 473 in 1915, but

also improved its discipline and teaching, so that within a few years the College came to be recognized as one of the leading Colleges of Lahore.

Apart from the Islamia College, Fazl-i-Husain made substantial contribution to other educational activities of the Anjuman. He helped in the foundation of the second Islamia High School and of two primary schools. He was responsible for drafting the memorandum submitted by the Anjuman to the Local Government when an enquiry was made by the Government of India in 1913 for the extension of education among Muslims. After becoming Minister of Education in 1921, Fazl-i-Husain did not lose interest in the activities of the Anjuman. In the same year Government made a grant of Rs. 50,000 for building the Crescent Hostel, and the annual grant was increased to Rs. 50,000, which was later further increased to Rs. 62,000. In 1926 Fazl-i-Husain, Sir Abdul Qadir and Mian Muhammad Shafi reformed the constitution of the Anjuman in order to make it more workable and efficient.

## CHAPTER V

## *PUNJAB POLITICS 1877-1918*

IN the configuration of Indian politics, the Punjab occupies a position of unique importance, both from the point of view of its vast economic possibilities, and from that of its strategic military positon and almost inexhaustible man-power. Yet the Punjab has never made a proportionate contribution to the political progress of India. Its political immaturity has laid it open to the reproach of being 'the Ulster of India'. The communal problem in the Punjab, more intractable than in the rest of India on account of two equally balanced communities with the added complication of the Sikhs, has been a constant hindrance to the solution of the communal tangle in India. As the 'sword arm of India', and as a constant collaborator in strengthening British imperialism, the Punjab has been looked upon by the politically conscious in the rest of India with considerable misgivings. More recently, certain separatist tendencies have raised the most vital political issues. Its remoteness from the rest of India and the intricacies of its historical background have made it an enigma to the outside world. A proper appreciation, therefore, of happenings in the Punjab during the 20th century cannot be gained without some enquiry into its economic, social, religious and political characteristics. Fazl-i-Husain spent nearly thirty-five years (1901-1936) of his life in this Province as a social reformer, an educationist, a statesman, and an administrator and made some of the most valuable contributions to its political evolution. What he did or attempted to do cannot be evaluated or even understood without some knowledge of the circumstances in which he found himself and the odds with which he was faced when

he decided to embark upon a career of public service. As a Punjabi political leader he suffered from certain important handicaps peculiar to public life in the Punjab, which it is necessary to indicate in order to make an accurate estimate of his personality, his ability and political sagacity. Had he been born in another country or another province he might have reached greater heights of eminence, but that would not have made the intrinsic value of his performance greater, because without him the Punjab would not have achieved the measure of political progress it has achieved during the last quarter of a century.

The lack of vigorous interest in politics in the Punjab has always been an anathema to people outside the province. The peculiar slow tempo of the life of this province is due *inter alia* to various factors which were in operation even before the advent of the British. The Punjab has never had a settled Government for any length of time, such as would have enabled it to develop a tradition and a culture of its own like those of Oudh, Bengal or Maharashtra. Apart from lack of cultural tradition, the religious background has been confused. Old nomad tribalism, Hinduism, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Islamism and Sikhism, all, throughout Punjab history counteracted one another and none of them could become strong enough to be a decisive influence in the life of the province. Perhaps this is the reason why the Punjab has been such a fertile ground for new faiths. Arya Samaj, though originally started at Bombay, found a home in the Punjab. The Ahmadiyya sect was founded in the Punjab; it is inconceivable that it should have taken birth in the Frontier Province or even in Sind. It is also characteristic of the Punjab that both those sects should have achieved limited popularity, and later should have broken up into smaller sects.

The Punjab is, therefore, a home of lost religious causes and lacks social coherence. Such an atmosphere precludes power of resistance to outside influences. Indeed invasions and occupations of the Punjab have been such a common feature of its history that the annexation by the British

failed to evoke any marked resentment or hostility. In fact certain Sikh Chiefs rendered help to the British, and the annexation of the Punjab by the British was facilitated by the Punjabis themselves. Domination by the British appeared to them so natural that during the Mutiny, within eight years of its annexation, the Punjab provided 70,000 disciplined soldiers, of whom 23,000 were fighting for their foreign rulers outside the province. This can have been due only to one main reason, namely, the disintegration of the socio-religious fabric of the province. It is perhaps this peculiarity of the province which explains the fact that there has never been in the Punjab a national leader of outstanding importance to India. A leader inspired with religious fervour like Tilak in Maharashtra or Arabindo Ghosh and B. C. Pal in Bengal can have neither strong nor universal appeal in the Punjab. The only Hindu leader the Punjab has ever produced was Lajpat Rai but he acquired fame not in the Punjab but in America, and his activities were largely concerned with politics outside his own province. In the Punjab his followers were confined to one section of the Arya Samaj, and even they at times wavered in their allegiance to him. A national leader, to command respect from his opponents, must have the support of the masses, but the Punjabis have never offered united and fervent support to their political or even to their religious leaders.

On account of certain historical reasons the British found in the Punjab well-preserved joint village communities consisting of peasant proprietors; and being fully conscious of the political advantages of maintaining the existing framework of society, and of keeping the land in the hands of those whose hereditary occupation is tillage, they successfully prevented the growth of large landowners. It has been the ideal of the Punjab administrators to keep the peasant proprietors of the province in possession of their land and moderately content. These are at present nearly fifty per cent of the cultivators, and those paying more than Rs. 500 as land revenue are less than 2,500 persons. The Punjab peasant has a relatively large holding

as compared with his brother elsewhere in India. The expropriation of the peasant proprietor has been to a large extent prevented by law. State assistance was provided to save the peasant proprietor from the money-lender, and he was also helped by making available for him through canal irrigation large tracts of land which hitherto had been lying barren. In short, the policy of Government ever since the annexation of the Punjab has been to maintain the Punjab, for purely political reasons, primarily as an agricultural province comprising of peasant proprietors attached to their land, and thereby prevent the development of a commercial and an industrial middle class and a landless proletariat which would provide, as it did in Bengal and Bihar, recruits for the political life of the country. All that happened in the Punjab was that with the breaking up of the feudal economy and the British exploitation of the Indian market by way of construction of public buildings, roads, bridges, railways, irrigation works, there grew up a wealthy Indian 'go-between' contractor class, but they were closely allied with the British by economic interests, and could not be expected to adopt an independent line of action in political matters. This class was so small that it could not take the initiative in industrial development, such as would give the Punjab an enterprising middle class interested in politics. On the other hand, the peasant proprietor has always been the bulwark of political conservatism and an inexhaustible source of man power for the British Army.

Further, as a counterpoise to the educated classes the policy of the Punjab Government was to encourage and to develop in rural areas a landed gentry (including members of the old nobility) who would be strictly loyal to the British. The landed gentry were carefully nursed by being given *jagirs*, titles and land, and by being constantly brought before the public eye in various spheres of administration. The landed gentry consisted of 'Loyalists,' as Government called them; 'moderates,' as they called themselves; 'sycophants,' as their opponents called them.[1] Among them

[1] Lajpat Rai—Congress Presidential Address. Calcutta, 1920.

were Sir Bahram Khan, Nawab Muhammad Hayat Khan, Malik Muhammad Amin and Malik Khuda Bakhsh Khan, who were from time to time nominated members of the Punjab Legislative Council and supported the administration in every possible way. Among them were also Malik Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana and Sunder Singh Majithia, who represented the Punjab in the Imperial Legislative Council, and at the end of the Great War opposed the holding of an inquiry into the Punjab Disturbances and supported instead the Indemnity Bill, Martial Law and all that was done in its name. The cause of the Punjab had, therefore, to be pleaded by non-Punjabis. In the matter of Reforms, Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia, Mian Muhammad Shafi and Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan did not sign the famous Memorandum of Nineteen. Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan instead wrote a formal letter to the Viceroy criticising it.[1] Mian Muhammad Shafi issued a confidential circular to certain Muslim leaders against the Home Hule movement.[2]

The Punjab was the last province to be annexed by the British, and this fact is not without significance. Annexation at a single stroke afforded a clearer and a wider field for administrative effort, of which full advantage was taken by a select body of exceptionally able officers. These officers decided from the very begining to rule the province firmly and, if necessary, ruthlessly. In the rest of India the population retained their arms, matchlocks, swords and spears long after these became unnecessary for the protection of their persons and property, whereas in the Punjab there was a general disarmament after the annexation.[3] "The Punjab was administered by a famous school of district officers who were purposely left by the Government a large degree of freedom and initiative. Their relations with the people were personal and intimate, and as long as their methods were justified by success, they suffered little interference from Calcutta or Simla."[4] The Punjab has been the province that most young men enter-

[1] *Al-Asr* (Lahore), November 5, 1916.
[2] *Virat* (Lahore), September 24, 1917.
[3] *Modern India and the West*, L. S. S. O'Malley, 1941, p. 56.
[4] *History of India*, Robert, p. 517.

ing the Indian Civil Service have wished to go to, the place where 'a Saheb is a Saheb.' It began as a frontier province, the shield of India, with a military role which gave its administration the severity and the ruthlessness of the camp and the field.

The levelling process of the Rule of Law, the most significant feature of the Pax Britannica, was introduced in the Punjab with important limitations. Customary law, largely tribal in origin, had here an authority unknown in the rest of India. Similarly, in consonance with its general policy, Government attempted with success to keep the Punjab behind other provinces in India in the matter of constitutional development. The Indian Councils Act, 1861, established Legislative Councils in Bombay and Madras, and authorized the establishment of similar councils in other provinces. The Bengal and the United Provinces councils were constituted in 1863 and 1866 respectively, but in the Punjab a similar council did not come into existence till 1837, thirty-six years after the Act which authorized its creation. The Indian Councils Act of 1892 authorised an increase in the membership of the Councils, and allowed reserved seats to be filled by indirect election from public associations and municipal and other bodies. Although every other province in India took advantage of these provisions, none of them were ever extended to the Punjab, where the strength of the Council, established in 1897, was fixed at nine, all of whom were nominated by the Lt. Governor.[1] The Morley-Minto Reforms maintained the traditional discrimination against the Punjab. The Punjab, like Assam, was allowed only thirty members in spite of the fact that the population of the Punjab was twenty millions while that of Assam was only seven millions. Similarly, while the proportion of elected members to the total strength was 53% in Bengal, 48% in Bombay, Madras and Eastern Bengal, 42% in U.P., the Punjab had only 19% elected members. Although Assam and C.P. were merely Chief Commissionerships they had, as compared with the Punjab, a greater proportion of

[1] Punjab Administration Report, 1911-12, p. 92.

elected members; while other provinces were represented in the Imperial Legislative Council by elected members, the Punjab was represented by a majority of nominated members. In spite of the fact that the Muslims were in a majority in the Punjâb, the Muslim representative to the Imperial Legislative Council was, unlike his colleagues from all other provinces, always nominated. In the same way, while the representative of the landlords in other provinces was always elected, the Punjab sent one nominated by the Lt. Governor. Finally, unlike other Provinces, until 1920 the Lt. Governor of the Punjab was without colleagues or an Executive Council.

Western contacts and influences not only reached the Punjab later than in Madras, Bombay, and Bengal, but had been considerably modified by the time they came to be felt in the Punjab. The British came to the Presidencies as traders and equals but they come to the Punjab as successful conquerors of practically the whole of India. When the British had just assumed authority in India, in the Presidencies they were looked upon as usurpers; while in the Punjab they were considered conquerors and deliverers from the anarchy and oppression of Sikh rule. The people of the Presidencies resented the assumption of powers by the British, while the Punjabis felt overawed by the majesty and strength of their new Government. The influence of the Indian renaissance and the new education began much later in the Punjab than in the rest of India. Educationally, the Punjab was the most backward province in India. The first graduate from the Lahore College passed in 1870, and the Punjab University did not come into existence till 1882. Primary education continued to be neglected till the close of the 19th century. In the Punjab, education touched only a small percentage of the population, and there was hardly any class which could be said to form a focus for hatred of the alien rulers, such as could be found in Bengal.

These, in short, have been the basic features of the political life of the Punjab. The yeaı 1877, which incidentally was also the year when Fazl-i-Husain was born, may be taken

as a convenient starting point for tracing the development of political events in the Punjab. The year 1877 was in a way an important one in the history of the Punjab. Surendra Nath Banerjee came to the Punjab and founded the Lahore Indian Association, the first political organization of importance in the Punjab. Political progress was slow and it rested with the Bengali immigrants to struggle against the traditions peculiar to the peasant proprietor and the landed gentry, to oppose the predominance of the Punjab administration, and to play a part in Punjab politics which the Punjabis at that time could not play. For want of local talent, Government recruited Bengalis for Government service. At the same time the Bar was monopolized by the Bengalis. The Indian Association was run by the initiative of two Bengalis. In spite, however, of Bengali efforts, the Indian Association was for a long time an inactive body.

A branch of the Indian National Congress was formed in the Punjab in 1885 but its activities did not amount to anything more than annual gatherings in which a few interested in the movement participated. The organization had no contact with the people and did not function for the greater part of the year. The only movement in the Punjab of any consequence was the Arya Samaj, which by 1889 developed an attitude of confirmed hostility towards the Congress.[1] Further, when the Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900 was passed, the Hindus expected the Congress to join hands with them in protest, but when they found that the Congress, solicitous for the welfare of the peasant, could not do so, their sympathies with the Congress became lukewarm. As Duni Chand, a veteran Congressman, has remarked: "The Congress from 1885 to 1905 was nothing but a gathering of a few holiday makers out for intellectual entertainment."[2]

In 1905, politics in India took a new turn, and the nationalist forces, which had been gathering strength for some time, ripened into a more insistant, robust and

[1] *The Story of my Life*, Lajpat Rai.
[2] *The Ulster of India*, Duni Chand, 1936, p. 2.

fervent nationalism. The Lahore Indian Association elected Lajpat Rai to go with the Congress deputation to England. On his return from England, the first political protest meeting was held in Lahore, at which Lajpat Rai said that the loyalty of a people is conditional on just treatment by Government, and preached in the Punjab the triple Congress message of Swadeshi, Boycott and Swaraj. The first Provincial Conference was held in 1906 at Lahore. A visit of Gokhale further encouraged nationalist workers in the Punjab. The Canal Colonies Act gave them an opportunity to work among and win the support of the peasantry. In 1909, the 24th Session of the Congress was held at Lahore.

When Fazl-i-Husain moved from Sialkot to Lahore in 1905, he interested himself in provincial as well as in national politics, and became a member of the Provincial Congress Committee and of the Lahore Indian Association. In common with moderate Congressmen of the time, Fazl-i-Husain, while sharply criticizing certain objectionable features of the Morley-Minto Reforms accepted them as a move towards the associating of Indians in the administration of the country. "Few blunders in the administration of India", he said, "roused the people more from their state of political lethargy than the partition of Bengal, and the Colonies Bill in the Punjab. Lord Curzon at the time attributed the general discontent to a few agitators, and failed to read the signs of the time, and his repressive measures gave a good start to the national movement....That Morley-Minto Reforms were grudgingly given, their working left in the hands of bureaucracy, that in practice these reforms have proved to be quite illusory, are facts by now admitted on all hands. Though Lord Morley did not give us reforms of a substantial nature, yet he cleared the ground and started us on a course of advancement."[1]

In 1914 India answered the call to arms with unswerving loyalty and the Punjab made a major contribution towards the Indian war effort. Fazl-i-Husain conceived of the war

[1] Presidential Address to the Fifth Punjab Provincial Conference.

as a conflict between the principles of freedom, democracy and justice, and those of slavery autocracy, and injustice. "It is a war", he said, "to liberate the democratic principle from the meshes of autocratic power, however efficient... England came into the conflict from no sordid motives, but to defend the principle of affording full scope to every nation, and for the matter of that to every human being to attain the fullest and highest development that the nation and the individual are capable of."[1] He took part in popularising war loans, and for his services was awarded a sanad in connection with the War Loan of 1918.[2]

In the spring of 1918 the Allies were feeling the severe strain of the war. The Premier asked the Government of India "to redouble their effort". The Viceroy held a War Conference at Delhi. In response to the call of the Premier it was proposed to produce another half a million combatants. Fazl-i-Husain felt that the "compulsory voluntary aid" enforced in the Punjab was harmful, and advocated conscription as the best means of providing recruits, introducing equality, and restoring the lost manhood of India. The proposal did not find favour with Government and the conference only fixed a quota of contributions for each province. Thereafter Sir Michael O'Dwyer called a provincial War Conference at Lahore. Fazl-i-Husain was invited to speak at this Conference, but he refused unless he was permitted to mention the demand for self-Government. "It was not right", he said, "to ask the people to fight if they were to be treated as mere hewers of wood and drawers of water. Indians must be given a position equal to the British in the Army, Defence Force and the Reserves". "Should England", he asked, "allow India to be governed by those principles from which she would like even Germany to be released."[3] Sir Michael ridiculed the idea that Indians should be granted the King's Commission,[4] whereupon Fazl-i-Husain refused even to attend the meeting.

[1] Presidential Address to the Fifth Punjab Provincial Conference.
[2] Sanad dated August 1, 1919.
[3] Presidential Address to the Fifth Punjab Provincial Conference.
[4] *The Indian Annual Register*, N. N. Mitter, 1919, p. 131.

Sir Michael initiated the policy of standing "no damned nonsense", of teaching the Indians to keep to their proper place, of letting the educated community realize that he was the Government, and that his wishes were law. When it was proposed that an Executive Council might be established in the Punjab, he rebuked those in favour of the proposal, and said that the "matter could come within the range of practical politics only if it could be shown that the present administration of the province suffers from certain defects, and that the addition of an Executive Council could remove those defects."[1] During the course of a budget speech he said:

> "For forms of Government let fools contest
> What ever is best administered is best."

The senior members of the Bar were made to understand that they would be incurring the displeasure of Government by undertaking to defend persons accused of political offences. Some of the leading members of the Punjab Bar were constrained to refuse briefs offered to them.[2] Under the Defence of India Act he prohibited the entry into the Punjab of Tilak and B. C. Pal, who wanted to conduct Home Rule propaganda. He gagged the vernacular press, and prevented nationalist papers, edited outside the Punjab, from circulating in the province. The students were prohibited from joining the Congress.[3] In short, Sir Michael was striving to make the Punjab a kind of Ulster in relation to the rest of India, a bulwark of reaction against all reform.

Although Fazl-i-Husain had been a member of the Congress and the Indian Association since 1905, he did not take a vigorous interest in politics till 1913. In 1915, however, he was in the thick of the fray. The O'Dwyer regime infuriated him, and he took up politics with enthusiasm. In 1916 he decided to enter the Punjab Legislative Council. His pre-eminent position in the Punjab University natur-

[1] Punjab Council Proceedings, April 13, 1919.
[2] Presidential Address of Lajpat Rai to the Indian National Congress, 1920.
[3] Punjab Legislative Council Debates, 1917, p. 246.

ally suggested that he might be elected by the University. Since the inauguration of the Morley-Minto Reforms, except for two years when Sir P. C. Chatterji was elected, Shadi Lal had represented the University in the Legislative Council. When Fazl-i-Husain offered himself for election he once more came up against the sad realities of political life for a Muslim in India. "An Indian Muslim in the Punjab", he observed later, "may be intensely national, sincerely non-communal, not only in thought but in action, in all his dealings and none may point out a single incident to the contrary and yet when the occasion arises the non-Muslim leaders and the public would not prefer him especially if he happens to be capable and strong." Of nearly thirty Hindu leaders, some of them of the most eminent position, and for whom he had the highest regard, he found only three[1] who were prepared to support him, while the other twenty-seven, with profuse apologies and regrets, withdrew their support, saying: "You are the best man, and we trust you will succeed, but we very much regret we are not free to give you our vote."[2] The candidates were Durga Das, Raja Sir Harnam Singh, and Fazl-i-Husain. The Hindu members were determined to prevent the election of Fazl-i-Husain, and in order to avoid a three cornered election, Durga Das withdrew so as to enable the Hindus to vote with Indian Christians and Europeans for the Christian candidate. Thus the election of Sir Harnam Singh was a practical certainty,[3] but Fazl-i-Husain accidentally discovered that his opponent was a state subject of Kapurthala and not a British subject. As this was a valid objection against his nomination, it was raised before the returning officer after the nomination papers had been filed. The objection was accepted and Fazl-i-Husain was declared elected. Thus Fazl-i-Husain was elected in spite of Hindu opposition, though his success was due more to chance than to anything else.

[1] Dr. Hira Lal, L.M.S.; Harkishan Lal, Bar-at-Law; Devi Dayal, D. A. V. College, Lahore.

[2] Note written by Fazl-i-Husain, 1936.

[3] *Tribune*, April 11, 1916.

Within the Council Fazl-i-Husain at once became, and remained till the inauguration of the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms, the severest critic of Government and the foremost advocate of reforms and political progress in the Punjab.

In 1916, when Fazl-i-Husain actively associated himself with the national movement in the country, he found public life in the Punjab almost non-existent. "For the past ten years", wrote *The Hindustan*, "the Punjab has been locked up in deep slumber. From the political point of view this province is so inactive that while the public men of all other provinces have expressed their opinions regarding the operation of the Press Act, the public of this province has shown no activity, except in publishing a few articles on the subject. Then again, when other provinces are preparing for the coming session of the Indian National Congress nothing is being done in the Punjab, where the Provincial Congress Committee wakes up only once a year, when nearly a dozen residents of Lahore meet and reluctantly perform the duty of electing two or three delegates to the Congress. The Government of India Consolidation Bill has been introduced in the House of Lords. The public bodies of all other cities are expressing dissatisfaction with the Bill, but the Punjabis have so far maintained an attitude of perfect silence."[1] The Punjab had at the time no accredited leader. Lajpat Rai was an exile in America and was not permitted to return to India. Harkishan Lal, President of the Indian Association, was too pre-occupied with his industrial concerns and financial projects, especially on account of the failure of some his Banks in 1913-15, to be able to pay any attention to political matters. It was observed that "the Punjab considers it an act of heresy to take part in politics. This province, has, therefore, neither had a conference, nor is any important question discussed here. There is, however, an Indian Association but it holds a meeting whenever it is forced

[1] June 28, 1916.

to do so. It then goes to sleep."[1] The Punjab was the only province in the whole of India where no Provincial Conference was in existence.[2]

Fazl-i-Husain decided to awaken political life in the Punjab and to bring her into line with the rest of India. He opened his campaign in the Punjab Legislative Council. The Muslim members of the Council had hitherto invariably maintained discreet silence. Fazl-i-Husain was the first Muslim to break this silence, and urged his Muslim colleagues to take some interest in the proceedings of the Council. He convinced the elected members of the justness of the measures he proposed from time to time, and created a following which in time developed the semblance of an "opposition" party. There was no party system in existence, but community of views gave the proceedings of the Council an importance hitherto unknown to the Punjab. Throughout 1916-20 Fazl-i-Husain advocated an enterprising policy of expansion of beneficent services by Government. He protested against the accumulation of financial balances, and wanted Government to spend freely on education, sanitation, development of Vaccine Institute, the foundation of an Institute for Hygiene, educative propaganda, and measures to counteract waterlogging. He opposed the excise policy of Government as one based on the encouragement of the luxury and the vice of drink.

On one occasion, when Sir Michael O'Dwyer slighted Indians and said they were unfit to be given representative institutions, Fazl-i-Husain strongly protested, and the Lt. Governor was obliged to withdraw his remarks. He was successful in having resolutions passed for raising the Punjab Chief Court to the status of a High Court, for the establishment of an Executive Council in the Punjab, for the representation of Punjab Muslims on the Imperial Legislative Council by election rather than by nomination, and for the removal of the ban in the Punjab on the entry of newspapers from

[1] *The Virat* (Lahore), April 30, 1917.
[2] *The Desh* (Lahore), April 19, 1917.

other provinces. He championed the cause of civil liberties and rights in the Punjab, though, on account of official opposition, often unsuccessfully. When the Habitual Offenders (Punjab) Bill was placed before the Council in 1918, he opposed it as a measure calculated to restore *Sikha Shahi* (arbitrary despotism) and to negative the protective provisions of the existing law. He was apprehensive that Government wanted to arm itself with special powers to restrict the activities of those politically unacceptable to Government. Similarly, he opposed the Punjab Village and Small Town Patrol Bill (1918) as unnecessary on the ground that "the new system of *Thikri Pehra* is a system of compulsory co-operation, although it has been called by Government Voluntary Chowkidara system." It required the protection of the rich of the village by the poor, and it encroached upon the individual liberty of the people by forcing them to act as Chaukidars, while an extra Chaukidar could easily be engaged by the villagers as a whole. Government refused to accept these arguments and passed the measure by an official majority.

Fazl-i-Husain supported a resolution permitting the use of Urdu instead of English in the Punjab Legislative Council. "The subject", he said, "is of very great interest indeed not only from the literary point of view but also from a political point of view. Councils exist for the purpose of framing laws to be used in the province. The local Legislature as at present constituted has a number of elected members, and the only reason why the principle of election has been introduced is that there should be real representation of the people. Inasmuch as members are returned by their constituencies to represent them in Council they should be able to do so. Unless the rules are modified, a member who does not know English is unable to represent his constituency. A particular constituency has great faith in a Punjabi who does not know English and therefore returns that Punjabi. Why should the rules be so framed as to prevent his taking part in the deliberations of the Council and render it impossible for

him efficiently and effectively to represent his constituency. It is often alleged by the officials that the English-knowing Indians are not the real representatives of the people and that they on account of their profession take a particular view of political questions that come before the Council; while it is quite conceivable that the representatives of the non-English-knowing Punjabis entertain different views, why should the rules be so framed as not to permit that section of the Punjabis being adequately represented in the Council? The Hon'ble Member, who does not know English, has no chance of taking part in the debates, he has no chance of making himself heard and he has no chance of hearing arguments. It comes practically to this that although the law allows the people to return a non-English-knowing man whom they trust; the regulations of this Council do not allow that member to do his duty by his electorate. The present regulations tend to create a gulf between the people of this province and the educated Punjabis."[1] Government did not accept these arguments, and negatived the resolution by an official majority.

Fazl-i-Husain then started organizing public opinion in the Punjab in order to refute the contention of Sir Michael O'Dwyer that the province was not at one with the rest of India in demanding the acceptance of the Memorandum of the Nineteen and the Congress-League Reforms scheme. On February 5, 1917, under the presidency of Fazl-i-Husain, a crowded and an enthusiastic meeting was held at Bradlaugh Hall, Lahore. *The Bulletin* reported: "It was was one of the grandest public meetings on record in Lahore. The Hall was filled to its last bench with Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and the dais was radiant with the leading lights of the city. The speaker could not have found a more enthusiastic audience. Several very able speeches were made supporting the Memorandum. In his presidential remarks the Hon'ble Mian Fazl-i-Husain ably summed up the whole situation and showed how a self-governing India would be an asset of incalculable value to the Empire. India, he rightly said, was no longer a

[1] Punjab Council Proceedings, 1917.

baby, and its treatment as such could no longer contribute to the strength of the Empire. For example, he pointed out amid cheers that if India had not been treated as a baby in military matters she could today have fought the enemies of the Empire alone."[1]

Three weeks later a second meeting was held to reaffirm the support of the Punjab to the Congress-League scheme, and indignation was expressed at the policy of repression culminating in the internment of Mrs. Besant. *The Tribune* wrote: "The second mass meeting which was held on Sunday afternoon at the Bradlaugh Hall under the presidency of Mian Fazl-i-Husain, to consider the report of the Public Service's Commission, was as great a success as the first one supporting the post-war reform memorandum; and it afforded an unmistakable proof that the heart of the Punjab, which has, as recent events have shown fully, justified its role as the sword arm of India, had been deeply stirred over the supreme question of the day. One had indeed to be present at the meeting to realize the depth and earnestness of the patriotic feeling that swayed the vast audience. Every reference to service and sacrifice for the country and Empire was received with deafening cheers."[2] *The Observer* summed up the new spirit in the Punjab by saying: "The upheaval in the political atmosphere of this province is usually strong and it has resulted in the happy record gatherings in the Bradlaugh Hall under the talented guidance of the Hon'ble Mian Fazl-i-Husain, who had so far led a secluded life, owing to the unfortunate and miserable political condition of the Muhammadans of this province. He deserves to be congratulated by the bulk of the intelligent Muhammadans in this province, as he has taken the right opportunity in hand and has risen above the common and petty prejudices of the reactionaries who held sway in the Punjab."[3]

With the object of further stimulating political activity of the Provincial Congress Committee, Fazl-i-Husain proposed the establishment of District Committees in every

[1] February 6, 1917.
[2] February 27, 1917.
[3] February 28, 1917.

district of the Province. The foundation of the Lahore District Congress Committee was laid, and it was urged that similar committees should be established in other districts. Within six months district committees were esablished in practically all the districts and affiliated to the central institution. Had it not been for this, the Provincial Conference held in October of the same year would not have been a success.[1] When in 1917 it was agreed to send a Congress deputation to England, it was decided to include Fazl-i-Husain as a representative of the Punjab,[2] but he felt there was more important work to be done at home and declined to go abroad.

Such activities could not pass unnoticed by Government. The Chief Secretary called R. B. Ramsaran Das and some others who happened to be present at the Bradlaugh Hall meetings and reprimanded them for associating with Fazl-i-Husain. On June 28, 1917, Fazl-i-Husain held another public meeting in the Bradlaugh Hall, but at midnight, following the meeting, all the newspapers in Lahore were prohibited by Government from publishing the proceedings of that meeting or even referring to it. Government admitted on being asked by Fazl-i-Husain in Council, that the order prohibiting publication was issued by Government before the meeting was held[3] or its proceedings were known to Government.

Fazl-i-Husain did not wish to let the reawakened Punjab relapse into political apathy. In view of the impending visit to India of the Secretary of State he arranged a joint meeting of the Punjab Congress Committee and the Indian Association and decided to hold a special provincial conference. As no Hindu leader was willing to take the risk, Fazl-i-Husain felt compelled to accept the Presidentship of the special session of the Provincial Conference. This encouraged Harkishan Lal to become Chairman of the Reception Committee.[4] Fazl-i-Husain issued invitations to leaders all over India, but Government was anxious to bring

[1] *The Urdu Bulletin* (Lahore), February 16, 1917.
[2] *The Urdu Bulletin* (Lahore), May 9, 1917.
[3] Punjab Council Proceedings: November 6, 1917.
[4] Note written by Fazl-i-Husain, 1936.

about the failure of the conference and prohibited the entry into the Punjab of Mr. Jinnah, Surendra Nath Banerjee, Pandit Malaviya and Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru.[1] Fazl-i-Husain tried in vain to persuade the Chief Secretary, Mr. J. P. Thompson, to relax the orders. The difficulties of the conveners increased when, it is said, certain district officers tried to prevent residents of their districts from taking part in the conference.[2] In spite of these drawbacks Fazl-i-Husain and his colleagues worked indefatigably, and the fifth Punjab Provincial Conference was held at Lahore, on Friday, the 28th October, 1917, and was extremely well attended.

An eye-witness account said: "Mian Fazl-i-Husain sat in the presidential chair, tall and straight, calm and dignified, shrewd and reserved and the other political leaders of the Punjab clustered round him like stars round a vast luminary. He literally seemed to tower above his co-workers, and it appeared as if he was the hero of the hour. To my youthful mind, as to the minds of others, he then seemed to be a noble patriot and a courageous fighter for the rights of India. It seemed that he would lead the Punjab to the goal of self-Government through the path of Hindu-Muslim unity and that the coming generations of the Punjab would hail him as their deliverer. I know how the young men of the Punjab in those days used to point to him whenever they saw him as a great example of patriotic endeavour, national self-respect, and courageous resistence to reaction and repression."[3]

In his presidential address Fazl-i-Husain demanded the reversal of the repressive policy of Government, and the acceptance of the Congress-League scheme of reforms. He insisted on equality of treatment for the Punjab, and appealed for Hindu-Muslim unity. He severely attacked the bureaucratic regime in India, and particularly the one in the Punjab, as the greatest obstacle in the way of a popular Government. He criticized Sir Michael O'Dwyer

[1] Hunter Committee Minority Report, Chapter II, paragraph 5.
[2] *The Hindustan* (Lahore), November 2, 1917.
[3] Professor Diwan Chand Sharma: *The Truth about Mian Fazl-i-Husain, The Modern Review*, June, 1937.

for dismissing all political work in the Punjab as the "revolutionary activities of some misguided youths, not the result of any indigenous movement but the work of the enemies of England from outside India." He pointed out that the Congress had been carrying on propaganda, with self-Government as its ultimate object, for over a quarter of a century, and this propaganda was legal, constitutional, open, and in the strictest sense according to British ideals and democratic traditions. He added that the progress of constitutional agitation for administrative reform should not be made to suffer on account of the criminal acts of a few misguided persons. He emphasised that the Punjab was at one with the rest of India in claiming the acceptance of the Congress-League Reform Scheme.

Speaking of the discrimination against the Punjab he said that "at every step one feels that it is the worst treated province in India. Not only has it no Executive Council, but it has no High Court. Its representation on the Imperial Council is inadequate, and is ineffective as it is not properly recruited. Its local Legislature is far too small and is badly recruited inasmuch as nomination is very largely resorted to. There is but one thing that is most prominent and that is the iron heel of the executive. Again, our Government takes good care to segregate us. Doors of the Punjab are barred against leaders of political thought in other provinces. So far as I can judge, it is not so much an insult to their political ideals and methods as it is to our intelligence or our commonsense or sanity. We always understand that Western thought was strongly opposed to *purdah*, why they raise an iron wall along the boundaries of the Punjab to keep out men who talk by the hours in other provinces without doing any harm to any one? Is it that the chastity of Caesar's wife is not above suspicion or is it that Caesar is unnecessarily over-suspicious?"

With regard to Hindu-Muslim unity, Fazl-i-Husain said: "For some years past we have been treated to the mystic formulae,—Muhammadan first and Indian afterwards, in Muhammadan gatherings, and in the reverse order—Indian

first and Muhammadan afterwards, in Congress gatherings ...religion and patriotism are two out of the many component parts of a man's mind which is one and indivisible whole and these component parts are not so many chapters for one to precede the other...I am a Muhammadan and an Indian at one and the same time. I am one indivisible entity and I can't be one thing at one time and another one later on. I repeat that I am an Indian and a Muhammadan at one and the same time. It is a fact that before last December the accepted theory was of the inevitable antipathy between Hindus and Musalmans, and though the thoughtful members of both the communities deplored this estrangement between their respective communities, and invariably referred to the good old days when Hindus and Musalmans treated each other like brothers, still nothing succeeded in bringing about a reconciliation. What had led to the estrangement? So far as one can find, it was the distribution of loaves and fishes of official patronage that created heart-burnings, and these were accentuated when the system of election came into vogue...In course of time the number of the educated Musalmans increased, and ten years or more ago the thoughtful among them felt the need of bringing about a rapprochement between the two great communities. Though the idea was shared by many, yet Minto-Morley Reforms tended to widen the gulf. The Musalmans had no political ideal before them. They had a vague notion that they depended on the favour of the Government and not on their own merits. It was but natural that educated Musalmans should revolt against such debasing notions, and strive to save national self-respect by eschewing flattery. This led to the formation of political associations, and the repeated disappointments in the search after favouritism led them once more to take stock of the situation. It was one of the objects and aims of the All-India Muslim League to co-operate with their Hindu brethren in achieving what was for the good of both...eventually the Congress adopted communal representation and laid down a proportion for each province and the Imperial Council as well...Thus it would appear

that it is no make-believe peace that is patched up between the two great communities. It is the well considered peace mutually beneficial to both sides, and equally honourable, let me add, to both sides, made in their own interests no less than in the interest of their motherland..."

Referring to the question of the "haughty bureaucracy", Fazl-i-Husain said: "What we object to is the bureaucratic system. The Government of India is too wooden, too iron, too inelastic, too antediluvian to be of any use for the modern purposes we have in view. It has proved to be of too much rigidity...It is the evil system which converts an irresponsible servant into an insolent master...We are deeply grateful for the maintenance of internal peace, and for a very large number of blessings that the administration claims to have conferred upon us, but is that any justification for perpetuating the system, which is mechanical, irresponsive, doctrinaire, and absolutely impervious to public opinion?"

The presidential address of Fazl-i-Husain raised a storm in the province. As compared with the presidential address of C. R. Das to the Bengal Provincial Conference it was at once more realistic, practical, vigorous and inspiring. The Anglo-Indian Press condemned it most strongly. The Indian Press eulogized it to the skies and for the next two years the Punjab Press and the Punjab public had but one leader, had but one idol, and that was Fazl-i-Husain. The Punjab awoke from its deep slumber and supported the claims made by the rest of India. The conference proved a turning point in the history of the Punjab. The immediate effect of the address was to awaken the dormant political energy of the province.[1] O'Dwyer's argument, that at least in his province there was no demand for constitutional reforms, was shattered by the success of the conference and its subsequent echoes. The idea of excluding the Punjab from the scheme of Reforms had to be given up. Harkishan Lal was able to say: "The so-called non-political Muhammadan, now leads the political group. He has no differences with his Hindu

[1] Syed Nur Ahmad: *Mian Fazl-i-Husain*, 1936, p. 30.

colleagues; there are no two polities or politics of Hindus and Muhammadans."[1] Thus Fazl-i-Husain did for the Punjab what Dr. Rajindra Prasad did for Bihar, what Pt. Malaviya did for the U.P., what Surendra Nath Banerjee did for Bengal, and finally what Tilak did for Bombay. The *Tribune* remarked: "From today onward the people (of the Punjab) feel a new impulse for their patriotic efforts and will unflinchingly do their duty in a thoroughly constitutional and loyal manner to carry out the aims of the Congress and the (Muslim) League, designed to secure liberty and contentment for the country on true British ideals."[2]

[1] *Tribune*, October 27, 1917.
[2] *Tribune*, October 28, 1917.

## CHAPTER VI

## *MUSLIM POLITICS 1905-1920*

THROUGHT his public life, Fazl-i-Husain was concerned primarily with the progress and regeneration of his community. He led the Punjab Muslims for nearly a quarter of a century, and dominated All-India Muslim politics during the six most critical years (1930-1936) in the political life of the community. Since Muslim politics occupied such an important part in the life of Fazl-i-Husain, it seems necessary to explain the essential background of Muslim politics so as to show the mainsprings of his policy, and the extent to which he modified the programme handed down to him by former Muslim political leaders. Among these Sir Syed Ahmad was the first who stood out. He was above all a realist and regarded the Mutiny as a futile waste of energy. He remained loyal to the British, and accepted British dominion in India as an inevitable fact of the greatest importance, and on this condition based his policy of loyalty to the rulers.

It should be remembered, however, that in his campaign of rehabilitation of the Muslims, Sir Syed conceived of Hindus and Muslims as one people, and throughout his life championed the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. He repudiated the view that India was *Dar-ul-Harb*, and said that India was *Dar-ul-Islam*, where Muslims should live in peace rather than at war with people of different faiths. As against this fraternal outlook, there arose certain forces in the political life of the country which seriously endangered communal harmony. A Hindu revival coincided with British anti-Muslim policy, and worked to the detriment of the Muslims. When in 1867 the Bihar

Government introduced Devanagri script instead of Persian script in Government offices and courts, Sir Syed felt deeply disappointed and became conscious of a new factor in Indian political life. Soon after this Benares Hindus started a strong movement in favour of Hindi Sabhas all over the United Provinces, but fierce Muslim agitation prevented the story of Bihar from being repeated. But Daya Nanda founded the Cow Protection League and Swami Vivekananda declared: "I am an imaginative man and my idea is the conquest of the whole world by the Hindu race."[1] Tilak revived the cult of Savaji and widened the breach between the two communities.

In view of the hostile attitude of the British towards the Muslims and the increasing hostility of the Hindus, Sir Syed decided that the Muslims should not participate in the activities of the All-India Congress, founded in 1885, lest the British hold the Muslims responsible for subversive activities and repeat the unhappy story of British retaliation after 1857-58 and again after 1870. He was deeply conscious of the fact that the Muslims were backward as compared with the Hindus, and that they would not be equal to the task of defying the British Government.

The vast majority of the Muslim community stood aloof from the Congress and reposed implicit faith in Sir Syed's leadership. While at the first session of the Congress there were thirty-three Muslims out of 440 delegates, in 1905 there were only seventeen Muslim delegates out of a total of 756. In 1898 Sir Syed Ahmad died, and some Muslims began to think of actively participating in politics but among the vast majority Sir Syed's policy was still quoted as sacrosanct.[2] In 1901, as an offshoot of the revived script controversy in the U.P., Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk founded the "Muhammadan Political Association". But this newly created body confined its activities to the United Provinces and worked lifelessly and indifferently till 1904. Gradually, however, Muslim opinion began to change, and within a few years the call for political

[1] Lovett: *History of Indian Nationalist Movement*, 1921, p. 65.

[2] C. F. Andrews and G. Mookerjee: *The Rise and Growth of the Congress*, 1938, p. 172.

activity among Muslims became more and more insistent. "Unless a miracle of reform," said Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, "speedily occurs, we Muslims are doomed to extinction, and we shall have deserved our fate. For God's sake let the reform take place before it is too late."

The intellectual renaissance among Muslims during the latter half of the 19th century brought capable middle class Muslims to the forefront in every province in India, and this provided the basis for a vigorous political life. Fazl-i-Husain was a child of the Muslim renaissance, and was amongst the first to inaugurate a new era in the political life of Muslim India. He returned to India in 1901 and in his address delivered to the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam clearly enunciated the vital necessity of a political organization which would unify Muslims, reform them, and stand for their interests against the encroachments of Government and of other communities. Emphasising the necessity of taking a new and a bold step, he said: "M.A.O. College, Aligarh, and the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam are very useful working institutions, the Nadwa's objects are laudable, but all these put together are insufficient and even incompetent to elevate our society. These institutions are not strong enough to work out our National Redemption." Fazl-i-Husain wanted Muslims to be reorganized socially, religiously and politically in a new way. He was convinced that the policy of Sir Syed, now followed for a quarter of a century, should be abandoned, and a new policy of active participation in politics adopted. He thus expressed the growing feeling that just as Muslim interests had suffered from their abstention from English education, so their political future might be jeopardized by holding aloof from political life.

Fazl-i-Husain gave his last address to the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam in 1904, and moved from Sialkot to Lahore in 1905. Soon after his arrival he sought the support and approval of his friends for laying the foundation of a Muslim political organization. He found a ready response to his views, but the alignment of parties presented certain difficulties. The Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam was divided

into two parties, one inspired by Mian Shah Din in the strict tradition of Sir Syed of eschewing politics as far as possible and on no account alienating the British, and the other of progressive views, desiring political advancement for the country, though not at the cost of Muslim interests. The latter group was led by Fazl-i-Husain and the former by Mian Muhammad Shafi, a lawyer of repute and ten years senior to him at the Bar. Fazl-i-Husain coined the name "Muslim League" and held a meeting in February 1906 at Lahore of leading Punjabi Muslims, excluding those of the rival party. In retaliation, some months later Mian Muhamad Shafi founded with the support of his friends a "Muslim Association". The organization created by Fazl-i-Husain was the first organization in India to call itself the "Muslim League".[1]

The partition of Bengal encouraged Muslims, and when in 1906 an announcement was made by the Secretary of State about the forthcoming reforms, some leaders of Muslim opinion decided to define a fresh programme. Proposals for further democratisation convinced them that democratic institutions were inevitable, and the only way to preserve the interests of the backward Muslims was to ask for safeguards. Mr. Archibald of Aligarh College, at the time in close contact with high Government officials, evolved in co-operation with Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk a scheme whereby the Muslims as a community should make special demands on Government in the forthcoming reforms. Accordingly a deputation consisting of leading Muslims headed by His Highness the Aga Khan waited upon Lord Minto on 1st October 1906, and asked for "(a) guarantees against infraction of Muslim rights; (b) separate electorates in municipalities, District Boards and Legislative Councils; (c) weightage, not by numerical strength but by political importance and value of the contribution made to the defence of the Empire." Lord Minto gave an immediate reply to the effect that "I am entirely in accord with you."

[1] Muhammad Numan: *Muslim India*, 1942, p. 64.

This was an encouraging beginning and Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk wrote to the Aga Khan: "The deputation which went to Simla should be kept alive, and I suggest that a Committee of members of the deputation should be appointed to correspond with Government for the realization of the representations made. This is the work of an All-India Association, and if you agree, I shall make detailed proposals."[1] The Aga Khan agreed, and on the occasion of the All-India Educational Conference held at Dacca, Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk opined that the time for Muslims to take part in politics had come, and that a political association for Muslims was now a necessity. As a result the All-India Muslim League was founded.

The first session of the All-India Muslim League was held at Karachi in December 1907. To this session repaired Mian Muhammad Shafi and Fazl-i-Husain to seek affiliation for their respective provincial organizations at the hands of the All-India Muslim League. Mian Muhammad Shafi anticipating a likely struggle, took with him a large contingent of supporters of his Association, and at Karachi received the valuable support of Raja Ghulam Husain. Fazl-i-Husain, on the other hand, not apprehending any difficulties, arrived with a few followers only. During the discussions that followed he was supported by Maulana Muhammad Ali and Mr. (later Sir) Ali Imam. As the Session progressed, Fazl-i-Husain decided at the cost of his personal interests to withdraw his claims, because he was anxious not to sow the seeds of discord among the Muslims of the Punjab. In taking this decision he agreed to the dissolution of his organization, and consented to serve as Joint Secretary to the Provincial Branch of the All-India Muslim League in the Punjab, of which Mian (later Justice) Shah Din was elected President and Mian Muhammad Shafi, General Secretary. Fazl-i-Husain, however, with his supporters such as Pir Taj-ud-Din, Malik Barkat Ali, Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, Khalifa Shuja-ud-Din, Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din, Ghulam Bhik Narang and other progressive Muslims, avoided active participation in the newly

[1] Maulana Habib-ur-Rahman. Khan: *Vikar-i-Hayat*, 1925, p. 426-42.

affiliated Provincial Muslim League. Mian Muhammad Shafi continued to be its head till 1916. The Muslim League was thus deprived in the early stages of its life of the services of some of the best and the most talented Muslims, and suffered on account of this initial weakness. Besides, the Muslim landed proprietors and rural masses were educationally too backward, and economically fairly comfortably off, particularly on acount of the income from military pensions, horse-breeding grants, etc., to be interested in politics. Only a small circle of the upper and middle class Muslims espoused the cause of the Muslim League in the Punjab, and in practice the activities of the League were confined to periodic friendly gatherings at the house of Mian Muhammad Shafi, who was well known for his great social qualities. Most of the work in connection with Muslim demands in the forthcoming reforms was, however, the result of the efforts of Mian Muhammad Shafi and Mian Shah Din.

Fazl-i-Husain and other Muslim leaders claimed separate electorates, not in a spirit of isolation but in the tradition of Sir Syed, to create real unity and to decrease conflict and antagonism between Hindus and Muslims. "Any attempt at amalgamation," said Syed Ameer Ali, "at the present stage would mean the submergence of an ill-organized, badly equipped, and badly trained minority under a majority vastly superior in numbers, and immensely better organized. No one acquainted with the social, religious and moral conditions of the Muslims can view such a contingency without the greatest misgivings. . . unity of sentiment and consciousness of identity of interest which in due course will remove the necessity of special representation is clearly developing at the top and if details are rightly handled it should not take long before it reaches the bottom."[1] Outstanding Hindu leaders such as Gandhi[2] and C. R. Das appreciated these views, and Gokhale appraised the safeguards at their true value, and did not regard them as anti-national.

[1] Nateson: *Eminent Musalmans*, 1926.

[2] M. K. Gandhi: *Hind Swaraj*, 1908, p. 70-72.

The fears of the Muslims having been allayed by Morley-Minto Reforms, they were prepared to develop a more sympathetic attitude towards the Congress, and soon exhibited a strong desire to strive for national freedom in co-operation with other communities. It was decided to hold a Unity Conference at Allahabad. At this Conference, apart from prominent Congressmen, the Muslims included the Aga Khan, Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk, Mr. Jinnah and Fazl-i-Husain. A Committee was formed to devise ways and means to give effect to a communal harmony programme.

Muslim public opinion matured rapidly, and it was decided to remodel the constitution of the Muslim League "on more progressive and patriotic lines". At the next session of the League in 1913 there appeared two distinct parties, one consisting of "progressives", including Maulana Muhammad Ali, Abul Kalam Azad, Mr. Jinnah and Fazl-i-Husain, who wanted to co-operate with the Congress, and the other consisting of Mian Muhammad Shafi, Maulvi Rafi-ud-Din and Syed Raza Ali who stood for preservation of Muslim rights, pure and simple, without alienating the British Government. The "progressives" successfully altered the programme which was now the "attainment, under the aegis of the British Crown, of a system of self-Government, suitable to India, through constitutional means, by bringing about, amongst others, a steady reform of the existing system of administration, by promoting national unity, by fostering public spirit among the people of India and by co-operating with other communities for the said purpose."

Thus within a few years the League attained political maturity and the era of Sir Syed's policy of political inaction was dead beyond resurrection. In the Punjab, Sir Michael O'Dwyer strongly disapproved of the new constitution of the League. Mian Muhammad Shafi, though the President of the League, publicly repudiated it. Within the provincial League Mian Muhammad Shafi was strongly opposed when he disapproved of a resolution against the Sharif of Mecca for his revolt against the

Sultan. As a result of both these incidents the "progressive" Muslims criticized him and an open letter to Mian Muhammad Shafi appeared in the *Zamindar* attacking the policy and working of the Provincial League. When the policy of the All-India Muslim League took another turn towards the left, the cleavage between the two became too obvious to be ignored. The *Observer* and the *Zamindar* criticized him for his "loyalty to the British Government at all costs," and repeatedly pointed out that the All-India Muslim League looked for close co-operation with the Congress. Fazl-i-Husain, as the leader of the "progressive" Muslims said that they would be glad to have Mian Muhammad Shafi as President provided he would follow the policy of the All-India Muslim League. Negotiations were conducted by Pir Taj-ud-Din, but proved fruitless.

When in November 1914 Turkey made common cause with Germany against the Allies, Anti-British feeling among Muslims became intensified. Muslim sympathies with the Congress increased and as a result of the joint deliberations of the League and the Congress, the Lucknow Pact was signed and the *Memorandum of the Nineteen* prepared. These developments created further difficulties in the Punjab. In January 1916 "progressive" Muslims held a meeting in Barkat Ali Muhammadan Hall, denounced the leadership of Mian Muhammad Shafi, and announced the formation of a new Punjab Muslim League. Opinion against the old League now began to gather momentum, and Mian Muhammad Shafi came to be regarded as an obstacle in the way of solidarity of the All-India Muslim League and the Congress. This state of affairs evoked from the All-India Muslim League a call for an explanation from the Punjab Muslim League. The charges were as follows:—

"(1) That constitutionally no Muslim League exists in the Province of Punjab.

(2) That the existing League either does not at all represent the sentiments and aspirations of the Muslims of the Punjab or, at any rate, is wholly unresponsive to the progressive instincts of the Muslims of that province.

(3) That it has openly as well as impliedly thwarted several actions and resolutions of the All-India Muslim League and the development of its constitutional aims and policy.

(4) That the Punjab League has not only never helped towards the expansion of the All-India Muslim League by giving it new members but that, on the contrary, it has checked such expansion whenever moved by the Council.

(5) That it is claimed on behalf of the new League established in the Punjab that the League represents the true interests and aspirations of the Muslim public of that province."

As a result of this enquiry the old Punjab Muslim League broke up. Mian Muhammad Shafi's rejoinder to the charges made by the All-India Muslim League took the form of a pamphlet containing countercharges against the parent body for unconstitutional acts. Thus matters came to a head, and at the next session of the All-India Muslim League at Lucknow on 28th December 1916, "the wicked and refractory doings of the disaffected body" were considered, and as a result the old Punjab Muslim League was disaffiliated, Mian Muhammad Shafi removed from the Vice-Presidentship of the Central League, and the new Punjab Muslim League was instead affiliated.

*The Observer* described the change in the Punjab Muslim politics by saying: "The new political life which has been infused into the minds of the Muhammadan public by the advent of the new Punjab Provincial Muslim League, has worked a miracle and has been able to demolish a false idol which was set up by the reactionaries in this province. The Muhammadans of light and learning have rallied round its banner and efforts are being made that the young party is not left out of its rank. The upheaval in the political atmosphere of this province is unusually strong and it has resulted in the happy record gatherings in the Bradlaugh Hall, under the talented guidance of Mian Fazl-i-Husain, who had so far led a secluded life, owing to the unfortunate and miserable political condition of the Muhammadans of this province. He deserves to be con-

gratulated by the bulk of the intelligent Muhammadans in this province, as he has taken the right opportunity in hand and has risen above the common and petty prejudices of the reactionaries who held sway in the Punjab."[1] Mian Muhammad Shafi had already lost the support of the majority of Muslims in the Punjab. The District Muslim League of Jullundur passed a vote of confidence in him, but this example was not followed by any other District League in the Province. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who disapproved of the growing co-operation of the All-India Muslim League with the Congress, tried in vain to assist Mian Muhammad Shafi in saving the old Punjab Muslim League. The new Punjab Muslim League was not allowed to present an address of welcome to H. E. the Viceroy during his visit to Lahore in 1917, and instead an address was presented by Mian Muhammad Shafi. Again, Sir Michael did not hesitate to disapprove of the leaders of the new Punjab Muslim League, and attempted to check their growing popularity through official pressure. When this attempt proved abortive, Mian Muhammad Shafi, in close collaboration with Malik Sir Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana, formed a new body called the Punjab Muslim Association. This too failed to flourish, and finally Mian Muhammad Shafi resigned from the membership of the All-India Muslim League in August 1917.

After the Lucknow Pact, the Congress, the Muslim League and the Home Rule League all agitated against the Defence of India Act, the Press Act and the detention of political leaders, and clamoured for the acceptance of the *Memorandum of the Nineteen.* The Government of India, however, embarked upon a repressive policy, and Sir Michael decided to carry it out effectively in the Punjab, particularly in order to show that there was no desire for reforms in his province. Fazl-i-Husain felt that the case for reforms in the Punjab should not go by default. He goaded the provincial Congress into activity, and a political Conference was held in Lahore with Fazl-i-Husain as its President. In order to control the activities of the Punjab Muslim

[1] March 14, 1917.

League more effectively, Fazl-i-Husain decided to become its General Secretary, and Pir Taj-ud-Din, who had been General Secretary since the formation of the new League, resigned in his favour, and Fazl-i-Husain continued to act as General Secretary till 1920. Thus as President of the Provincial Congress and General Secretary of the Provincial League, Fazl-i-Husain had far-reaching influence on the political situation in the province for the next three years.

Fazl-i-Husain was a member of the joint deputation of the League and the Congress which presented to the Secretary of State and the Viceroy the memorandum embodying the joint Congress-League scheme. When the Secretary of State received deputations from Provincial bodies he received from the Punjab deputations from the newly affiliated Punjab Muslim League as well as from the old Punjab Muslim League. Fazl-i-Husain as General Secretary of the Punjab Muslim League was its chief spokesman. Mian Muhammad Shafi represented the old Punjab Muslim League. Montague described his interview with Mian Muhammad Shafi as follows: "This morning I had a long talk with Shafi, who was very garrulous, who explained the history of the split from the Muslim League, and stated that there would soon come into being an All-India Muslim Defence Association. He claimed that Husain's organization was quite small, in fact that the deputation included all its members!"[1]

As the international situation took a fresh turn against Turkey, Muslim feelings in India verged on despair. After the armistice Muslim leaders declared that Muslims should boycott official peace celebrations so long as the Turkish question remained unsettled, and Gandhi announced his intention of declaring a *Hartal* and a day of mourning in support of the Muslim claims. While Sir Michael O'Dwyer held a public meeting in Lahore to celebrate the armistice, Fazl-i-Husain held a meeting condemning the attitude of the British Government with regard to Turkey and asked Muslims not to take part in the peace celebrations. Fazl-i-Husain wholly identified himself with the activities of the

[1] E. S. Montague: *An Indian Diary*, Delhi—November 23, 1917.

Congress and the League, and was inclined to be pan-Islamic and pro-Turkish, but both these tendencies were kept well under control by the sanity of his judgment and his strong commonsense.

In 1919, the situation became worse when Greek forces landed at Smyrna and slaughtered Muslims indiscriminately, and for his successes in Palestine, General Allenby was called "the victor of the last crusade". The All-India Central Khilafat Committee was founded. Fazl-i-Husain presided over several meetings of various Khilafat Committees. The Central Khilafat Committee approved of certain measures of non-co-operation as a means of forcing Government to deal with Turkey justly, and decided to send a Khilafat deputation to England. Fazl-i-Husain was one of those selected for the deputation.[1] The approval in principle of non-co-operation, though limited, raised the question of taking part in an unconstitutional agitation, but no specific decision was taken and the parting of the ways had not yet come.

The Treaty of Sèvres was the last disappointment, and a full fledged non-co-operation programme was announced on August 1, 1920. Here came the parting of the ways for Fazl-i-Husain. He believed that the British had been unfair to Turkey, Arabia and Palestine, and the conduct of Government during the Punjab Disturbances and with regard to Reforms was most condemnable, but at the same time he was convinced that unconstitutional agitation of the kind conceived in the non-co-operation programme was to a large extent useless, and fraught with grave dangers. He refused to non-co-operate. Sir Edward Maclagan, the new Governor of the Punjab, describing the views of Fazl-i-Husain, later wrote: "When I came to the Punjab in the summer of 1919 and wished to obtain an independent opinion of the situation, the first Indian whom I consulted was Mian Fazl-i-Husain. His views on such subjects as the 'Punjab Wrongs' and the Peace Treaty with Turkey were decided enough, but free from the hysterical bias which

[1] N. N. Mitter: *Indian Annual Register*, 1920, p. 282.

prevailed in some quarters, and his exposition of the situation was helpful."[1]

While Fazl-i-Husain refused to non-co-operate he also undertook to oppose the Hijrat movement which arose in the wake of Khilafat agitation. The Ali Brothers and Abul Kalam Azad made an appeal to Muslims to leave India. At Hazro Maulana Zafar Ali harangued 35,000 ignorant cultivators: "Remember your Government will perish. Remember that India is now *Dar-ul-Harab*. Our religious freedom has been snatched away. Baghdad has been occupied and virgin Turkish girls outraged. The treaty with Turkey is a useless scrap of paper and we must destroy it. What should be done under the present circumstances? It is incumbent on every Muslim to perform Hijrat." The Hijrat movement had great success in Sind and the N.W.F. Province, and no less than 18,000 persons migrated to Afghanistan. "Hundreds of families sold their land and property for a mere song; settled up all their worldly affairs, placed their wives and children on carts; surrendered the Government rifles entrusted to them for protection against marauders, and departed in the direction of the Khyber Pass."[2]

In its early stages Fazl-i-Husain saw the utter futility of the movement, and in spite of its tremendous emotional appeal he held a meeting in Barkat Ali Muhammadan Hall, and strongly condemned Hijrat agitation. The movement was, however, popular and he could influence only a few people in the Punjab. Suddenly in the middle of August the Amir issued an order prohibiting the influx of the *Muhajreen*. "The road from Peshawar to Kabul was strewn with graves of old men, women and children who had succumbed to the difficulties of the journey. The unhappy emigrants when they returned found themselves homeless and penniless, with their property in the hands of those to whom they had sold it for a tithe of its value in the first flush of their religious enthusiasm."[3]

[1] A note written by Sir Edward Maclagan for this book, dated November 13, 1937.

[2] Rushbrook Williams: *India in* 1920, 1921, p. 52.

[3] Rushbrook Williams: *India in* 1920, 1921, p. 53.

The League was now in the hands of the founders of the Central Khilafat Committee, all of whom believed in non-co-operation. In September 1920, the League and the Congress met at Calcutta. The Congress offered the League full support for Khilafat agitation, and in return the League offered full support to the Congress for Swaraj agitation. Although the Congress and the League had not yet formally adopted the non-co-operation programme, there was no doubt that they would do so at the next session. Fazl-i-Husain, who had attended the sessions of both the organizations, decided to sever his connections with them, and hurried back to Lahore. On 5th October, 1920, he called an urgent meeting of the Punjab Muslim League at his house. He felt that an unconstitutional agitation of the kind embodied in the non-co-operation programme was not in the best interests of his country, and did not hesitate to stand out and sacrifice his popularity and leadership at the altar of his convictions. He was in a very unpleasant position, because all his old friends and colleagues and his admirers were in the opposite camp. He appealed for a total rejection of the non-co-operation programme, but the majority was against him and the Punjab Muslim League adopted the principle of non-co-operation. Fazl-i-Husain then argued fearlessly against certain items of the non-co-operation programme, and was successful in persuading the Provincial League not to endorse the boycott of Councils, schools and colleges, and the law courts. In protest, however, against the acceptance of the principle of non-co-operation, he resigned from the League.

Pan-Islamism and non-co-operation spread like wildfire and both were now vital forces. The Imam of the Juma Masjid at Delhi was beaten, and a distinguished Muslim who was opposed to Khilafat and non-co-operation was refused burial in a Muslim cemetery.[1] To denounce Khilafat was obviously a bold step and certain political suicide. Apart from Fazl-i-Husain, only two prominent muslim leaders Fazlul Haq, President of the Bengal Muslim Conference, and Mr. Jinnah denounced Khilafat and non-

[1] Alfred Nundy : *Indian Unrest* : 1919-1920, 1921.

co-operation. Though Fazl-i-Husain stood discredited, he did not fail to benefit his province in certain important respects. He felt that non-co-operation spelled the greatest danger to schools and colleges. He was fully aware of the backwardness of educational progress in the Punjab, and his twenty years' experience of promoting education in the Punjab convinced him that Gandhi's scheme of setting up of national schools and colleges was impracticable. He had already succeeded in inducing the Punjab Muslim League to exclude educational institutions from non-co-operation programme, and now as a member of the Grand Council of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam and as General Secretary of the College Committee he successfully prevented Muslim educational institutions in the Punjab from being swept away by the non-co-operation movement. Although the Anjuman did not associate itself with non-co-operation, college students felt strongly and with other Muslims held public meetings outside Mochi Gate reviling Fazl-i-Husain, and abused him as one barrier between India getting back all its educational institutions and its independence and the slavery of British domination. He ignored such demonstrations and stood firmly between the College and non-co-operation. This example enabled Mahatma Hans Raj to save D. A. V. College against its non-co-operation assailants. Had it not been for the policy of rejecting educational non-co-operation thousands of young men would have found themselves wandering aimlessly in the streets. That they were saved from this fate was certainly due largely to Fazl-i-Husain, who courageously refused to make educational institutions the handmaid of the ever shifting exigencies of politics.

## CHAPTER VII

## *THE PUNJAB 1919-20*

SOON after the publication of the Montague-Chelmsford Report Fazl-i-Husain launched a campaign for winning equality for the Punjab in the grant of Reforms. It began in the Legislative Council when he asked Government "to take steps to secure that the Punjab is, in the matter of constitutional reforms, placed on an equal footing with the three Presidencies."[1] He further successfully moved a resolution to the effect that "the strength of the Punjab Legislative Council should not be less than 100; not less than four-fifth of the Council should be elected."[2] In opposing the suggestion that the total membership be reduced and the nominated element increased, he said: "I am afraid times are passed for that. We want a representative Council. Now we have got to rub shoulders with the representatives of the people and we should make every effort to remove the distinction of wealth, even of the aristocracy of intellect. Traditions of autocracy which prevailed in the Punjab seventy years ago are not the traditions that the Punjabis cherish, whether the Punjabis are educated or even commonsense village people." "The Punjab Government would have only a small number of members for the Legislative Council, and would not have the broad franchise recommended in the Montague-Chelmsford Report. The (Franchise) Committee did not agree and the Committee had their way."[3]

When Chaudhri Lal Chand proposed that "the electorate of rural and urban population in the Punjab should be

[1] Punjab Council Proceedings, November 20, 1918.

[2] Punjab Council Proceedings, November 21, 1918.

[3] S. N. Banerjea: *A Nation in Making*, 1925, p. 302.

separate and the number of seats allotted should be in proportion to the population", and also that "for seats allotted to the rural population the candidates should belong to the statutory agricultural tribes of the province", Fazl-i-Husain opposed both the resolutions[1] with the argument that "You are at present dividing the representation between two areas, urban area and rural area. I contend there are two conflicting irreconcilable interests and when you are separating these two, urban and rural areas, you are placing one class which has been dominating up till now, it might frankly be admitted, into a position of subserviency to which it has not been used, and to which its real and actual influence in village life is not entitled. I have really no sympathy for the "bania", nor have I had during a long ancestory anything to do with that class. But at the same time in the economic life of the village he is a figure which cannot be ignored...And to my mind it would be inadvisable to make a cut and dried division between urban and rural areas in that way, and to give the rural areas the benefit of all *kamins*, and so on, and to give them the benefit of over-riding the capitalist class. A more equitable way of dealing with the question, keeping in view the progressive nature of it, would be to give them representation which would accord with the number of the agricultural classes after some reduction, that is to say for the interests of population of big towns, educational interests, industrial development and progressive commercial interests, and so on. As I submitted before, as time goes on you will find that the distinction between rural area and urban area will tend to disappear." Other members of Council agreed with Fazl-i-Husain but the resolution was carried with the help of the official majority. With regard

[1] Fazl-i-Husain was at the time generally regarded as belonging to the urban classes. Commenting upon the appointment of Messrs. Harkishan Lal and Fazl-i-Husain as Ministers, the *Jat Gazette* of January 12, 1921 said: "Both of them are connected with the urban population and were elected by special constituencies. The new Council contains a large number of members elected by rural constituencies, and unless the present Ministers are supported by them they will be unable to retain their posts even with the help of official and nominated members.... The nomination of both from among the representatives of the urban population is an insult to the men returned by rural constituencies."

to the second resolution he observed: "The rural population is eighteen millions, of which a little more than ten millions are members of agricultural tribes. Because they are more in numbers than persons living in rural areas who are not members of agricultural tribes, it does not matter whether they own the land and till the soil, or whether they have sent soldiers to the Army, if they are not within that charmed circle of statutory agricultural tribes, they are no good, they cannot get elected. Now, that, I think, as has been very rightly pointed out, is fettering the discretion of the members of agricultural tribes, who have not the courage to come into competition, even when the voters are their own brethren. That I do not think is in the interests of the agricultural tribes or of agriculturists or even of rural areas although it may be in the interests of some of us, for whom it would be easier to get elected than it would otherwise be."[1] The resolution was defeated but on the recommendation of the Punjab Government the principle involved in the resolution was accepted by the Southborough Committee.

In order to make the constitution more democratic Fazl-i-Husain proposed that "the right of a voter in a constituency to stand for election to represent that constituency be not fettered by the imposition of a residential qualification in the constituency." In support of his resolution he urged: "Claim should be based on eminence, intellectual or otherwise, of the individual to come into the Council and say: I am the best fitted man in brain power, I know how to administer and on that account you should so frame your rules that I have an opportunity of coming in and ruling my country. Once a man has satisfied the two conditions, possession of land and possession of a house in a rural area, why should you go further and say: You are no doubt according to our definition rural in your life, in your habits, in your aspirations, in your nature and in your interests, but you can only represent the constituency in which your house is situated. What I claim is that by narrowing down the field of choice among the eligible

[1] Punjab Council Proceedings, November 21, 1918.

rural electors the chance of returning as good a Council, as otherwise would be returned, are being minimised. There is the urban area; there is the rural area. Within these two areas the greatest possible freedom should be allowed with the object not of returning suitable men but returning the most suitable men that the province can put forward from those areas."[1] The resolution, however, was lost to the official majority. The Franchise Committee accepted the Government proposal in a modified form, and thus made it difficult for the educated and politically alert classes to find a way into the Council.[2]

All these discussions indicate the trend of Government policy which, as Fazl-i-Husain pointed out to the Hunter Committee, was to look upon the educated classes as a nuisance, and in order to minimize their importance to conjure up the hitherto non-existent exaggerated distinction between the rural and the urban population. The educated classes were being put back, and by means of Jagirs and grants of land a *rais* class was being created to counter their influence. "Within a few years," he said, "the idea was steadily brought forward that really the persons who should be looked after are the rural classes; they represent the masses of country and it is in their interest that a great deal should be done, and this cannot be done by political leaders belonging to the urban (educated) classes."[3]

Fazl-i-Husain supported a resolution requiring that "the President and the Vice-President of the Punjab Legislative Council should be elected by the Council itself from among

[1] Punjab Council Proceedings, March 8, 1920.

[2] Chaudhri Chhotu Ram, of Rohtak on May 1, 1920, wrote a letter to the *Tribune* to say: "The imposition of any inter-district restrictions on the score of residence will seriously imperil the chances of any real growth of political life in the countryside. Rural areas cannot boast of any excess of thoroughly competent candidates, and such a crude application of the principle of 'the residential qualification' as is proposed by the Halifax Committee will result in a political disaster of the first magnitude. It is difficult to view with equanimity the prospect of a Council swarming with mere dummies. And if the recommendations of the Halifax Committee are accepted, this will be exactly the result. Inefficiency, incompetence, incapacity and ignorance will be the only fruits which can be borne by the Halifax Committee's recommendations." The justice of this criticism was in time recognized and residential qualification was removed in 1923.

[3] Oral evidence before the Hunter Committee.

its members."[1] He also desired that "the Minister in charge of the Transferred subjects proposed in the scheme of constitutional reforms should have perfect equality in status and emoluments with the members of the Executive Council."[2] As a member of the Reforms Committee Fazl-i-Husain opposed the suggestion of a Grand Committee as a reactionary proposal. In order to subject the Government of India to popular control, he proposed that "a system of Reserved and Transferred subjects similar to that proposed for the provinces be adopted for the Government of India."[3] As regards the communal question he suggested that "the proportion of Muhammadans in the Punjab Legislative Council as laid down in the Congress-League Scheme be maintained." Thus, in short, Fazl-i-Husain made every possible effort to make the Reforms democratic, liberal and progressive.

It is obvious that Fazl-i-Husain was a staunch advocate of the joint Congress-League programme, and whatever, success it achieved in the Punjab was to a great extent due to him. In 1919, when Mian Muhammad Shafi was appointed member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, Government consulted the four prominent Muslim organizations of the Punjab, namely, the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islamia, Lahore, Anjuman-i-Islamia, Lahore, Punjab Provincial Muslim League and Punjab Muslim Association. All of them recommended the nomination of Fazl-i-Husain to the Imperial Legislative Council. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, however, wanted someone more in agreement with his policy, and appointed Sir Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana instead.

Early in 1919 unrest in India increased rapidly. The expectations of the people were at their highest pitch, but the attitude of the British Government in several matters belied the hopes of the Indian people, and the feeling grew that they had sacrificed men and materials for the Allies in vain. Reports of various Committees such as Beachcroft, Essher, Lovett and Montague Committees, and the

[1] Punjab Council Proceedings, November 21, 1918.
[2] Punjab Council Proceedings, November 21, 1918.
[3] Punjab Council Proceedings, November 21, 1918.

activities of the European Association made the politically-minded feel that they had been tricked by the British Government, which was now bent upon restoring pre-war conditions. Victory brought racial arrogance, accentuating the worst features of British occupation. No European showed any recognition of the political and social changes of the war period. Several respectable Indians were insulted in railway carriages. The treatment accorded to Indians in East Africa and Uganda inflamed the minds of educated Indians still further. Thus both races were in the exasperated mood which precedes a fight.

In the Punjab feelings of unrest and discontent assumed a particularly aggravated and menacing form on account of certain factors peculiar to the province. Of these the most important were the methods adopted by the O'Dwyer regime for recruitment and collections of war funds and war loans. "Conscription and war taxation," said Fazl-i-Husain before the Hunter Committee, "would have been less irksome and less harmful than the so-called voluntary recruitment and voluntary contributions in the Punjab."[1] The Punjab Government pursued a policy of "compulsory voluntary aid". "If aid is voluntary or if it is legalised", he added, "then there can be no reasonable objection to its being given, but when the thing is not put on a voluntary basis then those who are not poor or weak escape. Town people pleaded law in their favour and villagers were impressed against their wishes."[2] Fazl-i-Husain told the Hunter Committee of certain cases in which he had appeared as counsel. In a village of 1000 people in Shahpur district, 150 people were prosecuted for rioting because inspite of persistent inducements and threats they refused to be recruited. In another district feeling against such methods had become so intense that a recruiting Tehsildar was murdered. This Tehsildar used to go about capturing the deserters and securing more recruits. It was a normal proceeding for people to enlist, join a regiment and then desert. War funds and war loans were collected to a large extent by equally doubtful means. Fazl-i-Husain pointed

[1] Written evidence of Fazl-i-Husain.
[2] Oral evidence of Fazl-i-Husain.

out to the Hunter Committee that the new Income Tax Act and Excess Profits Tax were utilised to collect war funds, and said: "I had made two or three protests already. In Jhelum there was a complaint that those people who never paid income tax and had paid no war loan or any amount towards war charities were being assessed not because they were liable, but because they did not pay anything to the war loan or the charities. They substantiated this by a number of judgments of the Income Tax Officer."[1]

Finally, the attitude of Sir Michael O'Dwyer towards the Reforms Scheme, political movements in general, the press and political leaders caused deep resentment among the people. The Punjab Government was, according to Fazl-i-Husain, "for repression and abuse of the Defence of India Act after the Russian methods."[2] The Rowlatt Bills[3] made the people cry out *Tang amad bajang amad*, and throughout India an agitation for their total rejection was started. The Indian Press condemned the Bills in the severest terms, and protest meetings were held all over India. Every Indian member of the Legislative Assembly opposed them and described them as "abhorrent and shocking", and "capable of producing untold misery". Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru warned the Government: "My Lord, you are going to throw the country into a whirlpool of agitation such as it has never witnessed before."[4]

The Punjab had hitherto held aloof from serious political activity, but the province now, as a result of the efforts of Fazl-i-Husain since 1915, showed signs of life and at once joined the agitation against the Rowlatt Bills. The second protest meeting was held by Fazl-i-Husain in Lahore on the 9th March, 1919. The meeting condemned the Rowlatt

[1] Oral evidence before the Hunter Committee.

[2] Written evidence before the Hunter Committe.

[3] The Indian Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 1919, and the Indian Criminal Law (Emergency Powers) Bill, 1919, required that (a) in areas where revolutionary offences were prevalent, anarchical offences could be tried by a special tribunal with no appeal; (b) Local Government might arrest suspected persons and confine them under prescribed conditions; (c) persons suspected of being concerned with movements likely to lead to the commission of offences against the State could be made to furnish security, reside in a particular place, or to abstain from any specified act.

[4] *Punjab Unrest Before and After*, p. 58.

Bills and asked for their total rejection by Government. It then considered the important question of the action to be taken in case the Bills became law. In view of the intensity of resentment against the Bills, it seemed inevitable that the meeting should take Gandhi's vow of passive resistance. Fazl-i-Husain was unwilling to resort to unconstitutional agitation, and to tide over the difficulty, during the progress of the meeting, deliberately framed a resolution which would not commit those present to taking Gandhi's Satyagraha vow.[1] The resolution required that "in the event of these Bills being passed into law in spite of the unanimous opposition afforded by communities of all shades of opinion, the Indian public will be justified in having resort to such forms of passive resistance as can be eventually decided upon." Syed Habib asked the audience "to adopt such means that the whole of Lahore should be converted into a jail." Fazl-i-Husain stopped him, and tactfully brought in the question of the resolution which was adopted. The gallery jeered and shouted at him, and a voice cried *Chief Court ki Judgie*, but he remained calm and resolute.[2]

For the time being Fazl-i-Husain had successfully withstood the onslaught of unconstitutionalism, but when, on March 18th, the second Rowlatt Bill became law, and on March 23rd Gandhi asked the people to observe *Hartal* as a sign of national humiliation, he found his position extremely difficult to maintain. Among the educated classes the majority did not subscribe to the passive resistance movement, but a minority now led by Duni Chand, Dr. Kitchlew, Dr. Satyapal and Pt. Rambhaj Dutt, were prepared to follow Gandhi's lead. On April 6th in order to carry out Gandhi's programme, in spite of a notice prohibiting processions on that day without a licence, an impromptu procession was taken out and a complete *hartal* was observed. Bare-headed citizens could be seen passing to and fro through the streets, and young men with black badges were seen everywhere. Early in the morning Fazl-i-Husain called a meeting of the Council of the Pun-

[1] Cross-examination of Fazl-i-Husain as a defence witness in the Lahore Conspiracy Case.

[2] Exhibit: 9 C.I.D. Report in the Lahore Conspiracy Case.

jab Provincial Muslim League, and passed a resolution that "there is no harm in holding a meeting of protest against the Rowlatt Act and in sending a wire to the Secretary of State for India, and any member of the League who wishes to join the meeting could do so; but if the question of Passive Resistance or any other part of Mr. Gandhi's programme is introduced, then the members of the League present in the meeting should not take any part in it and should withdraw by way of protest." In the afternoon a mass meeting was held at Bradlaugh Hall under the presidency of Pt. Rambhaj Dutt. Dr. Gokal Chand Narang moved a resolution asking for the repeal of the Rowlatt Act. Fazl-i-Husain arrived at the meeting amidst tremendous applause and greetings of "Gandhi-ki-Jai", and seconded the resolution. Although no resolution with regard to Satyagraha was passed, yet it appeared that the agitation was becoming increasingly unconstitutional and the movement had already become a mass movement. The majority among the educated classes, who did not subsribe to the Satyagraha movement, realized that the chances of their holding the masses back from joining it were very poor, and "passively resisted passive resistance."[1] After April 6th the agitation passed into the hands of the extremists, and the moderates became merely interested spectators.

The happenings of April 6th infuriated Sir Michael O'Dwyer. Talking to Bhagat Ram, he said: "Remember, Raizada Sahib, there is a mightier force than (Gandhi's) soul force," and to illustrate this he banged the table with his clenched fist.[2] This warning was implemented by prohibiting Gandhi to 'enter the Punjab,[3] and deporting Dr. Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal. By taking these measures the authorities intended to "disorganize" the agitation, but

[1] Oral evidence of Fazl-i-Husain before the Hunter Committee.

[2] N. N. Mitter: *The Indian Annual Register*, 1920, p. 39.

[3] Faz-i-Husain was convinced that "the extradition of Gandhi was unjustified, wholly unnecessary and actually led, considering that the Punjab on the 7th, 8th and 9th was absolutely quiet, on the 10th, to results opposite to those expected. If he had come nothing would have happened, and probably the effect would have been just the other way." (Chapter I, Hunter Committee Minority Report).

as stated by Fazl-i-Husain before the Hunter Committee, "this demonstrated to the people that the authorities had no regard for law and justice and were unnecessarily excluding respected and revered leaders on pretexts which failed to convince the people."

The situation in Lahore rapidly deteriorated. Shops remained closed; *langar khanas* were opened to provide free food during the hartal, and a *Danda Fauj* was organized. By hatred of Government the highest pitch of Hindu-Muslim unity was achieved. They drank water from the same cups; they exchanged headgears; Muslims of Lahore allowed Pt. Rambhaj Dutt and Harkishan Lal to address them from the pulpit of the Badshahi Mosque; the Hindus carried the *janaza* of a Muslim killed outside the mosque; a wit said that the word *ham* was made up (in Urdu) of letters H and M with nothing between and therefore, "we Hindus and Muslims should allow nothing to come between them."[1] Some had the names of Ram and Allah stamped on their clothes as a mark of unity. Government felt that Hindu-Muslim unity could have no meaning except as unity against itself and to terminate this Colonel Frank Johnson dispersed another crowd by firing causing several casualties. Harkishan Lal made great efforts to get the Committee constituted the previous day in the Badshahi Mosque, to adopt a resolution asking the people to open their shops, but he regretted that "Government was obdurate, foolish in the extreme and bent on showing its strength."[2] The Government of India notified a state of open rebellion in Lahore and Amritsar districts.

On the 14th April, Pt. Rambhaj Dutt, Duni Chand, and Harkishan Lal were arrested and deported. Fazl-i-Husain felt that if panic and hartal continued, Government might resort to further coercive measures, and in order to avoid this he persuaded prominent citizens of Lahore to issue a joint appeal to the people to end the *Hartal*. In the meantime the arrests had become known in the city, and people refused to pay any heed to this appeal. Thus

[1] *Civil and Military Gazette*, May 1, 1919.
[2] K. L. Gauba: *The Rebel Minister*, 1938, p. 71.

the Government made its own position worse by its ill-advised action in arresting popular leaders and losing all chances of utilizing their services to restore order. Further, when Fazl-i-Husain called a conference of the leaders and was discussing their next move, they were staggered to hear (15th April) that Martial Law had been declared. Fazl-i-Husain in consultation with Dr. Gokal Chand Narang and Manohar Lal decided to go secretly to Simla and and request the Viceroy to stop the reign of terror in the Punjab. His colleagues afraid of displeasing the Lt. Governor, at the last moment, expressed their inability to accompany him, but on the 16th morning he went to Simla alone. He interviewed Sir Sankaran Nair, Member of the Viceroy's Council, and was responsible for moulding his views which led ultimately to his resignation from the Viceroy's Council on the issue of the Punjab Disturbances. Fazl-i-Husain also saw the Viceroy and explained to him the situation in the Punjab. Sir Michael was adamant, and Martial Law continued. During Fazl-i-Husain's absence from Lahore orders of arrest were issued against him, and it was only at the intervention of the Government of India that the warrant of arrest against him was withdrawn.

After the tragic happenings of Jallianwala Bagh came the rigours of Martial Law. Although by April 20th the Disturbances were completely quelled, Martial Law was continued till 12th June, allegedly "to quiet the people, restore confidence, keep malcontents busy, and provide mobility for police forces." Fazl-i-Husain stated before the Hunter Committee: "The administration of Martial Law was calculated not to restore peace and order but to strike the imagination of the Indians, to humiliate and to disgrace them. . .It has whitewashed Ahmad Shah's and Nadir Shah's atrocities whom in our school days we were taught to dread as inhuman tyrants." Arrests were made by the police and the military, on mere suspicion, and 789 persons were kept in custody for considerable periods without trial.[1] To prevent Hindus and Muslims from

[1] Paragraph (6), Chapter VII, Hunter Committee Minority Report.

fraternizing the *langar khanas* were closed by force. Night passes were required to be taken by Indians, even by trusted persons such as Sir Muhammad Shafi and Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan, but Europeans were exempt from them.[1] Travelling passes were issued only on the recommendation of non-Indians. Thus an Indian could get a pass if recommended by his Anglo-Indian Chauffeur or butler, but not on his own representation.[2] All Indians were required to deliver their motor cars, bicycles, tongas and electric fans to Europeans for their use.[3] Fazl-i-Husain surrendered his car and his bicycle. In order to punish those who had been taking part in political movements, and particularly lawyers, Martial Law notices were pasted on their houses and they were required to preserve them, in default of which severe penalties were ordained. Fazl-i-Husain was one of the thirteen who were chosen for the purpose.[4] He said before the Hunter Committee: "Students were subjected to great indignities and humiliation; in some colleges parades were called four times a day in the hot sun, and the military arrangements for roll call under the shadow of bayonets (soldiers were placed between each row of the students) and machine guns (placed at the end of each row) were obviously made to humiliate them and touch their imagination rather than secure peace and good order."[5] Flogging in public was resorted to. No two Indians were allowed to walk abreast, nor were more than ten persons permitted to collect in any one place.[6] All Indians no matter of what position, were required to *salaam* Europeans. This was meant to humiliate the educated classes and to "teach them a lesson."[7]

Why, it may be asked, was Martial Law introduced and continued for so long? "Martial Law was introduced", said Fazl-i-Husain, "not to suppress revolt, rebellion or even disorders, but to punish political workers suspected of

[1] Written evidence of Fazl-i-Husain before the Hunter Committee.
[2] Written evidence of Fazl-i-Husain before the Hunter Committee.
[3] Paragraph (3), Chapter V, Hunter Committee Minority Report.
[4] Written evidence of Fazl-i-Husain before the Hunter Committee.
[5] Written evidence of Fazl-i-Husain before the Hunter Committee.
[6] Paragraph (3), Chapter V, Hunter Committee Minority Report.
[7] Oral evidence of Fazl-i-Husain before the Hunter Committee.

having directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously contributed towards the creation of an atmosphere which was favourable to disturbances. In almost every case Martial Law was introduced after the restoration of order,[1] and to minimize the unwarranted and ruthless slaughter at Jallianwala Bagh and to justify it subsequently."[2]

It may also be asked why the Punjab Disturbances of 1919 took place. The only explanation is that all that happened sprang from the working of a Mutiny-trained or obsessed mind. Edward Thompson aptly says: "Because of the mutiny a great fear broods over the European community in India and from time to time, often on very slight provocation leads to an outcry from 'energetic people' for immediate martial law." Since the Mutiny the British in India believe that there is always some sort of conspiracy among the 'natives' which may bear fruit at any time and endanger British rule in India. The Mutiny was regarded as an attempt by the Muslims to restore Mughal rule in India. After its suppression the attention of Government was directed towards the Sikhs and in the Kooka sect they suspected a conspiracy to re-establish Khalsa rule in the Punjab. The Kooka sect represented a reformist movement, and as such was unpopular among orthodox Hindus and Sikhs, nevertheless the Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana arrested a large band of Kookas and without any ceremony had them shot. In the so-called Ghadar movement the British unearthed another Sikh conspiracy and 'suppressed' it by shooting at Budge Budge.

The Mutiny-obsessed mind thereafter conceived that if it was not the Muslims, nor the Sikhs, then it must be the

[1] "Question: Was there any need for the introduction of martial law?

Answer: (a) Amritsar: On the 11th and 12th the police and military were in full control of the city, and on the 13th in an un-British way the people were fired upon. On the 14th everything there had settled down. There was no occasion to introduce martial law on the 14th; (b) Lahore: There was no justification for it. On the 14th everything was quiet, and European ladies were walking and cycling about as usual, yet on the 15th martial law was introduced. Continuance of *hartal* was due to the successive mistakes of the authorities, and the unpopularity of the Head of the Province. (c) The same holds true of other places." (Written evidence of Fazl-i-Husain before the Hunter Committee).

[2] Written evidence of Fazl-i-Husain before the Hunter Committee.

Hindus, or all three of them together, who had been plotting to bring about the 'General Conspiracy' of 1919. The chief exponent of this view was Sir Michael O'Dwyer. He believed that the disturbances were the result of a huge organised conspiracy to subvert the British Government and to seduce the Indian Army from its allegiance; a plot with its headquarters at Delhi, connected with the ferment in Egypt and the machinations in Afghanistan, and financed by Russo-German Bolshevik organizations.[1] He also believed that the "Chief Conspirator was Gandhi, and that in the Punjab he worked through the leaders of the educated community, namely, Harkishan Lal, Rambhaj Dutt, Duni Chand, Dr. Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal."[2] As against this view Fazl-i-Husain stated before the Hunter Committee: "The disorders in the Punjab were not the result of any conspiracy. At Amritsar deportations caused excitement and the mob instead of being tactfully handled was fired upon, in disregard of British principles of dealing with crowds and mobs. This act rendered the ignorant mob wild, and then the mob committed acts of violence. Exaggerated reports and rumours about Amritsar affairs spread to Kasur and caused excitement which the ignorant were not capable of controlling. In Lahore also there was great excitement but as the people were not quite ignorant, they were able to control themselves and committed no deeds of violence, but were fired upon. Again, exaggerated reports and humours spread to Gujranwala and other places and caused disturbances there. In each case one mistake led to another and the situation got worse."[3] And indeed Fazl-i-Husain's view was confirmed by the Hunter Committee which held that "on the evidence before us there is nothing to show that the outbreak in the Punjab was part of a pre-arranged conspiracy to overthrow the British Government in India by force."

After the disturbances it was decided to hold a Provincial Conference at Jullundur under the presidency of

[1] Hunter Committee Minority Report and *Indian Mirror*, dated July 24, 1919.

[2] *Tribune*, July 3, 1920: Letter by Lajpat Rai.

[3] Written evidence of Fazl-i-Husain before the Hunter Committee.

Harkishan Lal, but on account of his internment no session could be held. At the Delhi Session (December 1918), Harkishan Lal had invited the All-India Congress to hold its next session in the Punjab, and Fazl-i-Husain had placed a similar proposal before the All-India Muslim League on behalf of the Provincial Muslim League. The Congress and the League accepted the invitations and held their next session at Amritsar. In spite of all that had happened the Congress at this stage was still, on the whole, inspired by a spirit of co-operation and a desire to work the Reforms. Thus, while reiterating that the "Reforms Act is inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing", the resolution added that the Congress, "trusts that, so far as may be possible, the people will so work the Reforms as to secure an early establishment of full Responsible Government." Hakim Ajmal Khan, in his Presidential Address to the All-India Muslim League, said: "Although we are not likely to forget the deep agony caused by the occurrences of the Punjab and the events relating to the Holy Places, Khilafat and Turkey, we should, continuing our constitutional struggle, make a united effort to make the Reforms successful, as on that will depend our future development." Fazl-i-Husain, in complete accord with these views, was anxious to maintain unity within the Muslim League, and when some of the more conservative Muslims tried to break away from the influence of the Congress by proposing to hold the session of the Muslim League elsewhere, he successfully opposed them.

Fazl-i-Husain called himself a 'Moderate Unionist,' desiring to bring together the Extremists and the Moderates.[1] He was a constitutionalist, and regarded the Civil Disobedience movement as an inexpedient means of achieving political advance. He believed that "Freedom is the recognition of necessity,"[2] and no positive political achievement is possible except by a realization of limiting factors. He also believed that the non-co-operation leaders

[1] Evidence of Fazl-i-Husain as a defence witness in the Lahore Conspiracy Case, 20th May, 1919.

[2] The Communist manifesto, 1848.

were impractical and that their programme was fraught with grave dangers to the masses who could not grasp or practise the idealistic doctrine of *Ahimsa*.[1] On the one hand, he saw the Moderates appeal to reason and outline a constructive programme of revision of land revenue, extension of irrigation, development of railways, education and industry, amelioration of the condition of the backward classes, reform of village and district administration, and the organization of medical relief and sanitation; and on the other hand, he saw the Extremists appeal to sentiment and formulate demands which unarmed Indians could not force the British Government to accept. Fazl-i-Husain had, therefore, little difficulty in deciding the course of action he should adopt. He refused to resort to unconstitutional methods of agitation, and "did not hesitate to stand out and sacrifice his popularity and leadership at the altar of his convictions and what he considered were the best interests of his country."[2] The decision to abandon the Congress was a vital one, and in the view of some people laid him open to the charge of not being patriotic enough to make sacrifices for the freedom of his country. In reply he argued that it was not lack of patriotism but genuine difference of opinion about the efficacy of certain methods for achieving freedom which obliged him to part company with the Congress.

In the Punjab Council, as a 'Responsive Moderate', Fazl-i-Husain offered to work the Reforms provided that the Punjab Government would give an assurance that the officials would co-operate fully with the representatives of the new electorate to make the Reforms a success.[3] The new Lt. Governor was sympathetic to popular aspirations and gave the required assurance on behalf of Government, and in some ways a hopeful future for the Reforms in the Punjab was assured.[4]

The Provincial Congress Committee were asked by the All-India Congress to express their views about non-

[1] Oral evidence before the Hunter Committee.
[2] Note written by Fazl-i-Husain (1936).
[3] Punjab Council Proceedings, March 8, 1920.
[4] Legislative Council Proceedings, Volume XI, 1920.

co-operation. The Punjab Congress Committee (under the influence of Fazl-i-Husain and Harkishan Lal), and the Andhra, Bengal, and C.P. Congress Committees, gave their opinion that a boycott of the new legislatures was not called for. Tilak disapproved of both the Khilafat agitation and the non-co-operation programme, and with his dying breath said: "We want majorities not Mahatmas!" C. R. Das stood four square against non-co-operation. "There is not a single argument", he said, "advanced against my proposition of any value except only one, namely, Mr. Gandhi—Mahatma Gandhi—said this and said that. This is not an argument." Mrs. Besant refused to reject the Reforms altogether and Mr. Jinnah opposed Gandhi's programme. Pt. Malviya preferred to be called a 'political juggler' rather than non-co-operate.[1] Such were the personalities arraigned against Gandhi but for a packed session non-co-operation had little hope of success. Special Khilafat trains brought faithful adherents of Shaukat Ali, and Marwaris, personal adherents of Gandhi. In order to retain Muslim support, Gandhi persisted in supporting non-co-operation and in order to make the resolution more acceptable introduced the word 'gradual,' and left the word 'Swaraj' undefined. Only 1826 voted in favour and 800 against, while 3188 delegates remained neutral. This was a clear indication that the majority of Congressmen were against non-co-operation; and the movement was forced on an unwilling country.

In April 1920, the Punjab Provincial Conference held its annual session at Amritsar. Fazl-i-Husain, as Secretary of the Congress Committee, did not hesitate to enter the arena and oppose non-co-operation. Harkishan Lal, Ganpat Rai, and Dr. Gokal Chand Narang were also convinced that mass agitation would be unfruitful, and therefore, declined to boycott the Reforms Scheme. Dr. Kitchlew, Duni Chand and Dr. Satyapal refused to accept this view and forced the moderates to secede permanently from the Con-

[1] Ela Sen: *Testament of India*, 1939, p. 141.

gress. The resolutions of the Conference approved of non-co-operation in principle, though, at the instance of Fazl-i-Husain they omitted to specify some of the more extreme measures such as boycott of the Army and the Police, and refusal to pay taxes. Fazl-i-Husain fought fearlessly, but as he failed on the main issue he left the session on the second day of its proceedings. He was in a very unpleasant position. All his old friends and colleagues, and a host of his admirers were for non-co-operation. Nevertheless, he refused to be carried away by an appeal to sentiment and the rushing torrent of popular clamour.

Fazl-i-Husain, now offered himself for election in one of the four landholders' constituencies. His election was not free from difficulties. Mian Mohammad Shafi, as on previous occasions, was anxious to oppose Fazl-i-Husain and asked his son-in-law, Mian Bashir Ahmad, (a young barrister of four years' standing), not to withdraw his candidature from the landholders' constituency. Fazl-i-Husain was, however, popular and was elected by an overwhelming majority.

After the elections the Governor of the Punjab was to elect a Hindu and Muslim as popular ministers enjoying the confidence of the elected majority in the Legislative Council. Fazl-i-Husain was at the time a Muslim leader of importance and outstanding merit in the Punjab. Since 1915 he had been popular, and his unpopularity with a certain section of the people was only due to his refusal to subscribe to the non-co-operation programme. As the Extremists had decided to boycott Councils there was no possibility of any strong opposition to Fazl-i-Husain within the Council. Besides, "in spite of his failure to go over to the left, as so many Indian leaders had done, he still commanded the respect of the political world. Intensely unpopular amongst the extremist section of Muslims he still commanded their respect." In the Pre-Reforms Council he had been virtually the leader of the opposition, and he had also led the new political movement outside.

In the legal profession he was one of the topmost lawyers and President of the High Court Bar Association. Among Muslims in the Punjab there was hardly anyone who could be considered his rival. Mian Muhammad Shafi had left the Punjab. Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din was president of the Lahore Municipality, but he had taken practically no interest in the political life of the province. Dr. Iqbal was practically unknown as a political figure, and had devoted himself to literature. In view of these facts Sir Edward Maclagan wrote: "As the constitutional changes of 1921 got nearer, Mian Fazl-i-Husain was in some doubts whether to seek a career in the Provincial or in the Imperial Legislature; but ultimately decided, much to my satisfaction, to carry on in the Province. When the time came for appointing Ministers under the new constitution in 1921 I had no hesitation in holding that the Muslims should be represented by Mian Fazl-i-Husain."[1]

Among the Hindus the choice was somewhat difficult. Lajput Rai was an outstanding leader of all-India importance but he was won over by Gandhi at the Nagpur session (December 1920) and he did not offer himself for election to the Legislative Council. Excluding Lajpat Rai, Sir Edward Maclagan considered Raja Narendra Nath, Chaudhri Lal Chand and Harkishan Lal. Raja Narendra Nath was a big landlord of no less than Rs. 70,000 annual income. He had retired from Government service as a Commissioner, and his ability as an administrator was a recognised fact. He had taken part in political life, and was President of the Punjab Hindu Sabha. Apart from the fact that his views were not progressive enough for him to be acceptable to moderately advanced political circles, he belonged to the *Rais* class who were discredited during the Disturbances, and his selection as minister would have created no enthusiasm among the people for the Reforms. Chaudhri Lal Chand was an influential landlord of Rohtak,

[1] Note written by Sir Edward Maclagan for this book, dated November 13, 1937.

and for many years he had been a member of the Legislative Council, and had always supported Government policy. But in the prevailing political storm and stress, his selection could not give the impression that a progressive ministry was being constituted. Harkishan Lal was an infinitely more formidable personality. He was a capable banker and an industrialist of great repute. Some of his banks had failed in 1913-15, but he had paid his creditors the impressive sum of 31 lacs, and had no further embarrassing obligations. He had served on the Morley-Minto Reforms Council (1908-09) and had acquitted himself creditably. He had taken part in politics, and was extremely popular as President of the Indian Association of Lahore. He was Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Political Conference of 1917, and President elect of the Political Conference which was to have been held in 1919. His incarceration during the disturbances of 1919 and his sentence of transportation for life raised him to a pinnacle of popularity that very few of his contemporaries enjoyed. The presidentship of the All-India Congress—the summit of political ambition—seemed within his grasp. In 1920, while Gandhi and Pt. Motilal Nehru tried to induce him to non-co-operate he was at the same time being persuaded by Lajpat Rai and Pt. Malviya not to boycott the elections. Finally, partly on principle and partly "to get his own back on those responsible for the martial law regime even at the expense of some popularity,"[1] he decided in favour of working the Reforms and was elected by the Special Industries' Constituency. This discredited him in Congress circles, but opinion in the Congress was divided and the country at large did not fully grasp the fine distinctions of principle involved; so he still retained the immense popularity which the Lahore Conspiracy Case had given him. In 1908, Sir Edward Maclagan as Chief Secretary had come into contact with him and admired his business ability, just as now he recognized his popularity

[1] K. L. Gauba: *The Rebel Minister*, 1938, p. 98.

and strength of character in defying his party for what he considered right. Sir Edward was, however, doubtful whether he should select as one of his ministers a man who only recently had been sentenced to transportation for life for conspiring against the King Emperor. Another consideration, however, decided the matter in favour of Harkishan Lal. When Sir Edward offered a ministership to Fazl-i-Husain, the latter insisted that his colleague should be Harkishan Lal, and made it a condition precedent to his acceptance of office.[1] After some hesitation Sir Edward agreed, and announced his ministry to consist of Fazl-i-Husain as Minister of Education and Harkishan Lal, as Minister of Agriculture.

The appointment of Fazl-i-Husain and Harkishan Lal as ministers was universally approved by the Press. The *Tribune* wrote: "Sir Edward Maclagan deserves to be warmly congratulated on his choice of the first ministers under the Reforms' Act, for a better choice it would have been impossible to make."[2] It is significant that when a ministership was offered to Fazl-i-Husain he accepted it only after he had been allowed a voice in the selection of his Hindu colleague. The necessity of forming a party on the basis of a common political and economic programme was already present in his mind. He had not only sought election for himself, but had induced other capable and educated men, likely to fall in with his political views, not to boycott the Councils. He helped several people to secure election and hoped to receive their support in the Council. Although at the time there was no political party in existence, he worked for the formation of a strong political group which would be able to hold its own in the new Council. Fazl-i-Husain had not been elected with the help of communal electorates in the pre-Reforms Council or in the reformed Council, yet he regarded the device of communal voting as one tending to unity rather than to division between the two communities. The ministry had,

[1] Syed Nur Ahmad: *Mian Fazl-i-Husain*, 1936, p. 36.
[2] January 4, 1921.

of course, to be recruited from both, but he was anxious that it should have a common outlook on political, economic and administrative questions, so as to be able to bring members of different communities into joint activities in pursuit of common objectives. There was in the Council one pre-eminent Hindu Leader, Harkishan Lal, who had stood with him on the Congress platform of the pre-non-co-operation days and shared Congress ideals with him, and Fazl-i-Husain had no hesitation in choosing him and thus laying the foundation of a strong party Government in the Punjab.

## CHAPTER VIII

# *A MINISTER WITH A POLICY*

AS Minister of Education, Fazl-i-Husain adopted the old constructive Congress programme of nation-building, and the development of responsible self-government. The way in which he carried it out had, however, some distinctive features. One of these was the measure of his success, due to a rare combination of tact, firmness, tenacity and mastery over general principles as well as minute details. Another, and perhaps the most important feature of the working of this programme was the practical emphasis he laid on the word 'people.' He could not but as a nationalist interpret the word to mean all classes of people, and not only the middle class, the educated and politically-minded people. To bring the masses forward was the keynote of his policy as a minister, and the various measures of legislative and executive policies and orders for which he was responsible as a minister and Executive Councillor from 1921 to 1930 were inspired by this one principle.

In India, as a whole, the administration was spending only two annas per head on education, while the United States spent over Rs. 16 per head, England more than Rs. 9, and Japan Rs. 8 for the education of their people. It was not surprising, therefore, that only 5% of the population in India could be described as literate; as against 98% in Japan, 95% in the United States, and 93% in England. This appalling disparity in national expenditure on education among some of the civilized countries of the world and India, and the wide divergence in the figures of literacy, showed in unmistakable terms how this great

nation-building department had been neglected by the British administrators.

Fazl-i-Husain initiated a four-fold programme of expansion, economy, efficiency and equality. The expansion of education was the most urgent need, because in 1920 out of a population of 20⅜ millions, only 2.42% were receiving education in the Punjab. The urgency of expansion and serious financial stringency demanded drastic economy, so that every rupee saved could be made available for expansion of education. A very large proportion of pupils were congregated in the lowest school classes, which indicated a large measure of inefficiency. The alarming backwardness of several areas and communities demanded greater equality in the advance that was proposed to be made.

Fazl-i-Husain embarked upon this programme with vigour and enthusiasm. As a Responsible Minister, with a large following in the Council, he brought the Education Department into close touch with public opinion. Sir George Anderson, Director of Public Instruction, was in complete accord with his policy, and the constant encouragement, advice and guidance Fazl-i-Husain gave him inspired Sir George with confidence and a desire to do his utmost to carry out the policy successfully. The efforts of the Education Department, which had hitherto been confined to Anglo-Vernacular education, largely in urban areas, were now turned towards primary education in rural areas. The system of grants-in-aid, varying from 50% to 90% of expenditure, to local bodies on the basis of a grading according to their financial position, helped rapid expansion. While before the Reforms secondary education had increased rapidly and university education tolerably, there had been something like stagnation in primary education. Under the Reforms, secondary education doubled its rates of increase, university education trebled its rate, but primary education increased more than tenfold. As in a few other provinces "a burst of enthusiasm swept children into schools with unparalleled rapidity; an almost childlike faith in the value of education was implanted in the minds of the people; parents were prepared

to undergo any sacrifices for the education of their children; the seed of tolerance towards the less fortunate in life was begotten, ambitious and comprehensive programmes of development were formulated, which were calculated to fulfil the dreams of literate India. The Muslim community, long backward in education, pressed forward with eagerness to obliterate past deficiencies; enlightened women began to strain the citadel of old time prejudices against the education of Indian girls. Government, with the full concurrence of Legislative Council, poured out large sums of money on education, which had been regarded as beyond the pale of practical politics ten years previously."[1]

While before the Reforms, educationally the Punjab was the most backward province in India, except the U.P. and N.W.F.P., within six years Fazl-i-Husain made his province except for Madras and Bombay the most advanced province in India. During the first year of the Reforms the increase recorded was greater than in any other province except U.P. and Madras, both of which had populations nearly double that of the Punjab. While before the Reforms the percentage of the total population in the Punjab receiving instructions in all institutions had been 2.42%, after six years under the new system it was 6.71%.

Fazl-i-Husain regarded the effective expansion of Primary education as vital to the entire structure of education in the Punjab. Apart from the provision of an efficient inspecting staff, and census of boys of school-going age in rural areas the most potent measure in the expansion of primary education was the effective enforcement of the Compulsory Education Act of 1919. In spite of all difficulties compulsion was introduced and worked successfully in several districts. Everything was done to facilitate its enforcement. The curriculum was simplified and shortened, and school hours adjusted to make them acceptable to parents who found it hard to spare their children from work in the fields. The three-class schools and the five-class schools were eliminated in favour of four-

[1] *Progress of Education in India*: 1927-32, Chapter I, (4).

class schools, with the result that the teacher in the single-teacher school was relieved of the burden of teaching the fifth-class. At the same time the disappearance of the three-class schools equated the opportunities of urban and rural boys. Immediate and prompt legal proceedings against defaulting parents were helpful as a deterrent factor.

By the time Fazl-i-Husain ceased to the Education Minister in 1926 the Punjab was doing better than any other province in the expansion of compulsory primary education. The effect of compulsory education was two-fold. The percentage of boys receiving instruction in the Punjab increased from 4.77 in 1922 to 9.32 in 1927. This increase helped in the maintenance of economical schools, where the cost per pupil was low, and at the same time in the elimination of inefficient single-teacher schools. The importance of compulsion lay in the alarming fact that most pupils never completed the four years of primary education school life which were necessary to ensure literacy. A large proportion never went beyond the primary standard. This involved a tremendous waste of energy, time and money. The effect of compulsion was that school life lengthened and wastage decreased to a very appreciable extent.

In the sphere of higher education Fazl-i-Husain launched a remarkable experiment by promoting Intermediate Colleges all over the province. The excessive concentration of young students in Lahore subjected the teaching resources of the colleges to a heavy strain, and gave rise to mass teaching instead of genuine instruction. Besides, the high standard of living in Lahore and the various temptations of a large city proved distracting to the students and expensive to their parents. Finally, some means had to be found to encourage parents in backward districts, who were unwilling to send their sons away from home and parental influence to Lahore, to give college education to their sons. Fazl-i-Husain found the remedy in Intermediate Colleges. These colleges were to include two high school and two intermediate classes, with the object of

giving a more suitable teaching by a combination of school and college methods; Intermediate Colleges were located at suitable rural centres. By 1926, twelve Intermediate Colleges were established, covering nearly half the province, thus bringing higher education nearer home for the villager than it had ever been before. The Punjab was unique in having the largest number of Intermediate Colleges in India, and also in attempting this gradual separation of intermediate classes from university instruction.

Fazl-i-Husain adopted with equal boldness a programme of adult education, and within two years 98,467 adults were enrolled.[1] The Punjab became the foremost province in the field of adult education, and the Educational Commissioner with the Government of India observed: "Although the provision of facilities for the education of grown-ups is one of the greatest needs of the country in order to break down the illiteracy of the masses, no province except the Punjab has made any extensive provision for the education of adults."

"Shortly after," writes Sir George Anderson, "Fazl-i-Husain had become Minister of Education, a bulky file was placed before him. It contained a mass of opinions indicating that as the distinction between vernacular and Anglo-Vernacular middle schools had become so slight, the vernacular side of education should be merged in the Anglo-Vernacular. The issue appears to have been prejudged, and therefore the papers were forwarded with little comment to the minister. They were quickly returned with the observation that immediate discussion was imperative. In the course of that discussion the instructions of Fazl-i-Husain were both trenchant and decisive. He expressed in forcible terms the view that the abandonment of the vernacular system would be fatal in many directions, notably in the further impoverishment of the countryside and in the further congestion of the schools and colleges in the towns. As a result of this memorable intervention, the whole trend of educational policy as affecting rural areas was revolutionised. The number of vernacular

[1] Punjab Administration Report, 1924-25.

middle schools was rapidly advanced, farms and gardens were attached to them, teachers in agriculture were trained; and later, the whole teaching of the schools was brought into harmony with rural conditions and requirements."[1]

Finally, in the promotion of education, Fazl-i-Husain regarded equality of opportunity for all classes and all areas as the cardinal principle to be upheld. Backward classes and backward areas were to be afforded special facilities to bring them to the level of the more advanced. On this principle Government assistance was regulated according to the needs rather than the wealth of each district. Backward and poor districts were provided with additional inspecting staff and teachers from among their own people who could take a genuine interest in the children.[2] Such districts were not required to provide the same proportion of funds as other districts, and Government was prepared to meet expenditure up to 90% of the total in poor districts like Kangra and Mianwali. In regulating admission to training institutions preference was given to residents of backward districts. The institutions for training teachers at certain centres in backward districts were ordered to require less vigorous qualifications than ordinary normal schools. Intermediate Colleges provided easy access to higher education in the *Mufassil*. Training classes were attached to high schools in backward districts to facilitate training of teachers.[3]

Before the Reforms, the Muslims, as compared with the Hindus and Sikhs, were hopelessly backward in education. Apart from the general expansion of educational facilities, Fazl-i-Husain adopted special measures to promote education among members of his backward community. A large number of scholarships given to military families benefitted them. Also, in order to encourage Muslims freely to enter Anglo-Vernacular schools, a larger percentage of free studentships and scholarships was awarded to them. In areas where the population was largely Mus-

[1] Sir George Anderson: *Sir Fazl-i-Husain*, 1940.

[2] Report on the Progress of Education: 1921-22, paragraph (22).

[3] Report on the Progress of Education: 1926-27, Chapter X, para 3.

lim, Muslim headmasters were appointed, so as to make schools more popular with conservative Muslim parents. Religious bodies such as the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam were encouraged to expand their educational institutions and were assisted with liberal grants. As a result of all these measures, within a year and a half the Muslims in all institutions increased by 42.3% while the increase among Hindus was barely 19.6%.[1]

The solicitude of Fazl-i-Husain for the education of Muslims, however, does not mean that he was communal in his policy. Addressing the All-India Educational Conference he said: "There is one thing in particular to which I venture to invite the attention of all those interested in education in India. Tolerance is the creed as well as the practice of developed forms of society, and it is indispensable in the case of those countries wherein races and religions, as castes and faiths, mingle together. Tolerance is desirable in all countries, but absolutely necessary in India. The idea of attaining unity by overpowering or suppressing other races or creeds or schools of thought is obviously impracticable, and the only basis for co-operation can be a highly developed sense of toleration. . ."[2] "It is a platitude," says Sir George Anderson, "that education should be a means of uniting and not of dividing the rising generation; but unfortunately the bane of education in the Punjab is communal bias. Bearing in mind the acuteness of the communal strife, it is tempting Providence that from the age of early childhood until the time of early manhood, children should be educated in the narrowing atmosphere of communal institutions, but such had become very largely the accepted practise in the Punjab. It speaks much for the moral courage of Fazl-i-Husain that he strove to shake off early and valued associations and to do what he could to encourage the members of his community to send their children to publicly managed schools and colleges rather than to communal institutions. He, therefore, founded

[1] Report on the Progress of Education: 1921-22, Chapter XI, para 2.
[2] December 27, 1934.

a large number of Government High Schools throughout the province, and the support which he received from his community is indicated by the fact that in most of those schools there was a preponderance of Muslim pupils. The seed that he thus sowed is beginning already to bear fruit, and there is a growing desire among more thoughtful minds that the schools should be rescued from communal thraldom."[1]

Fazl-i-Husain had to struggle hard to keep the Muslims away from old fashioned and reactionery ideas. Writing to a friend, he said: "As regards Syed Zainulabedin Sahib and his views and the views of the public, as you know, if I had followed the views of others, I would not have been able to render any service to the Muslim community. Therefore, it is for the Indian Musalmans to decide whether they consider my judgment in the best interests of the Muslims, or consider that the views of sectarian fanatics, many of them moved by personal considerations, should be followed. You cannot be unaware that the Muslim opinion in Multan city was that compulsory primary education was an interference with religion and contrary to *Shariat*. I was not prepared to accept that view."[2]

In the atmosphere which prevailed immediately after the introduction of the Reforms, it required heroic courage to develop education on national lines and refuse to be drawn into the communal whirlpool. In Council all discussions on educational matters were given a communal complexion, and the great majority of interpellations were based on communal considerations. Appointments and promotions were jealously scrutinized from the communal point of view, and controversy arose from time to time about the distribution of grants-in-aid to privately-managed communal schools. Constant pressure was brought upon

[1] Sir George Anderson: *Sir Fazl-i-Husain*, 1940.

[2] Letter dated September 12, 1934 to Syed Rajan Bakhsh. In March 1922, compulsion was introduced in Multan city with the result that the boys of school-going age under instruction increased from 27 per cent. to 54 per cent.

the officials of the Department by political leaders to help this or that particular communal school Leaders of the various communities had come to realize that such schools were not only of importance to them at the time of elections, but otherwise in preparing voters for future elections.[1] Nevertheless, Fazl-i-Husain remained firm in developing non-denominational institutions and refused to encourage *Maktabs* and *Madrasas* and other such private Muslim institutions. "Hence it came about that whereas in Bengal the number of pupils attending *Maktabs* approximated 80,000, the number in the Punjab was negligible."[2]

Next to education Fazl-i-Husain was passionately interested in the development of local self-government institutions of every kind as the *sine qua non* of the future political development of the province. Without them, he said, political life in the Punjab could hardly be said to exist, and would be at the mercy of any whiff of breeze of political agitation that might be blowing. Stability in political life would ultimately be derived from the healthy working of local Government institutions in the villages, towns and cities, and from the experience gained by the people at large in working these institutions. He was convinced that "it is disastrous to maintain order, however mechanically perfect, or to organize virtue and comfort, however judicially proportionate, if personality and variety are gone. Self-Government is better than good government and self-government implies the right to go wrong. It is nobler for a nation, as for a man, to struggle towards excellence with its own natural force and vitality, however blindly and vainly, than to live in irreproachable decency under expert guidance from without."

For big cities the Town Improvement Act was placed on the Statute Book. It provided for the planning and extension of big cities, and afforded relief to congested areas in them. In the interests of municipal administration no less than four Acts were passed. Official members were

[1] Memorandum of the Punjab Government for the Statutory Commission, 1928, Chapter VI, paragraph (21).

[2] Sir George Anderson: *Sir Fazl-i-Husain*. 1940.

reduced, and the number of elected members was increased, while the elective system was introduced where it was not already in force. The franchise qualification was lowered and the elected element in committees was raised to 75% of the total number of members. Whole-time salaried Government officials were made ineligible for election. By the end of 1926, in the existing 105 municipalities there were 72% elected members, and the democratisation of municipalities resulted in the reduction of official Presidents from eighty-six to forty-one.

Fazl-i-Husain introduced equally extensive reforms in District Boards, the most valuable instrument of rural self-government under British rule. The franchise, was extended and in certain District Boards, all of whose members were formerly nominated, the elective system was introduced, and in the remaining Boards the elective element was strengthened at the expense of the official element. Thus by 1926, out of a total of 1,177 members 812 were elected and the rest nominated. Towards the end of 1925 Fazl-i-Husain announced that an official Chairman of a District Board could be replaced by a non-official. All District Boards were at the same time encouraged to delegate large administrative powers to non-official Vice-Chairmen in order to accustom them to conduct official business and to prepare them in due course to replace official chairmen.

Fazl-i-Husain's predilection in favour of local bodies was so strong that even when they mismanaged such institutions under their control he refused to curtail their powers and introduce official control. For example, some local bodies failed to enforce compulsory education. Some adopted a niggardly attitude over financial questions. In the appointment of teachers, personal considerations were frequently placed above merit and efficiency. Nevertheless, Fazl-i-Husain maintained that to prevent local bodies from learning by making mistakes was to rob the country of essential training for higher political and public life. This led Sir George Anderson to think it "doubtful whether Fazl-i-Husain realised sufficiently that in view of the

changing political situation, the position of local bodies needed review. He was apt in that respect to live in the past when he and his associates, in their struggle against bureaucracy, regarded official interference with the activities of local bodies as an anathema. Indian politicians, not unnaturally, have been slow to grasp the fact that ministerial responsibility and local independence go ill together. But an education minister must find it difficult to carry out his responsibility to the legislature in the matter of education so long as almost unsupervised control is vested in inexperienced and sometimes corrupt local bodies."[1]

After providing for cities and towns there still remained the vast countryside of no less than 36,000 villages. Fazl-i-Husain desired that the benefits of local self-government should reach every village. He also felt that the disintegration of the village community and the virtual disappearance of the old panchayats was unfortunate, and that unless the village organism was rejuvenated for common action in all matters of communal life, the villagers would not be able to withstand the highly organised opposition and pressure of the entire industrial world. He, therefore, envisaged the creation in each village or group of villages of a body which would meet, discuss matters of common interest, devise means for promoting the common welfare, and take action to enforce these measures with the help of the State and other public bodies. He felt it was necessary to create some "social tissue" for the routine administration of the common affairs of the village, for the management of the village school, for the relief of the sick and suffering, for the maintenance of public health, the execution of public works, the protection of property, and the settlement of disputes. It was impossible for the State to discharge these rural functions effectively. The State might and indeed must help with funds, with advice, and with the services of its expert officers in all these spheres of rural self-government, but for the very utilisation of such forms of State assistance rural organisations

[1] Sir George Anderson: *Sir Fazl-i-Husain*, 1940.

were required. Besides at the root of all progress lay the psychology of the villager, his capacity for corporate action of the kind developed by panchayats and the realization that he had sufficient potentialities within himself to better his condition. What was required, therefore, was to revitalise village corporate life, to rouse the villager from his lethargy and stupor, and to infuse in him a new hope, a new life. Fazl-i-Husain believed that the panchayat, historically the most ancient self-governing body in India, could revive the corporate character of the village community. What was more, the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms had enfranchised many villages, which gave them a new importance in the political world, and the villages could not play their role fully and effectively in the newly won democracy (limited though it was in several respects) without training in the art of self-government, within the limited sphere of the village.[1]

Fazl-i-Husain, therefore, recalled the forgotten recommendations of the Decentralization Committee of 1908 and secured the creation of statutory panchayats by the Punjab Panchayat Act of 1921. The Act provided for the establishment of panchayats and defined their powers and functions. After a panchayat was announced for a village, members of a panchayat, not fewer than three and not more than five, were elected by adults entitled to vote in the village, and the *panches* in turn elected a *Sarpanch*. The panchayats were assigned certain compulsory functions, such as the construction, maintenance and improvement of public ways and drains, the excavation, maintenance and improvement of wells, ponds and tanks, the establishment and maintenance of burial and burning grounds, and the duties of organizing village watchmen. The optional functions included the lighting of public ways and places, the construction of buildings for the convenience of travellers, the relief of the poor or the sick, the improvement of agriculture and agricultural stock, the laying out and maintenance of public gardens and playgrounds, the promotion and encouragement of cottage industries, and

[1] M. Azim Husain: *Panchayats in the Punjab*, 1941, p. 34-37.

the establishment of libraries. Under the Act, panchayats were invested with criminal judicial powers in cases of theft and mischief, and ordinary assault. Their civil judicial powers extended to claims with regard to money or property not exceeding Rs. 50. Panchayats were also authorised to enquire into the misconduct of petty Government officials and to report the matter to their senior officers.

One of the primary difficulties in the way of the success of the panchayat movement was the absence of any special agency which might foster the movement by propaganda, as also by instruction and supervision of existing panchayats. The Panchayat Act envisaged a revitalization of village corporate life, and an exaltation of the rural mind. This implied a mass movement which of necessity required propaganda to go well ahead of organisation and gather together the human material for the latter to work up. For this purpose there were no missionary workers to popularize the panchayat movement, and before Fazl-i-Husain handed over charge as minister he decided to appoint Panchayat Officers whose function it was to explain to villagers, where panchayats did not exist, the advantages of the system, and explain to the existing panchayats how best to make use of the Act in improving local conditions of life. The appointment of Panchayat Officers resulted, not only in a steady increase in the number of panchayats, but also in the improved working of the existing panchayats. In 1931, Dr. Gokal Chand Narang, Minister of Local-Self Government, who, as a representative of the urban Hindus, had been opposed to the panchayat movement since 1921, abolished the panchayat staff, with disastrous effects on the growth of the movement. In 1939, there were only 1,142 panchayats in the Punjab. Nevertheless, whatever success the panchayat movement had in the Punjab, due largely to the bold and sound provisions of the Act, was outstanding as compared with all other provinces in India.

While the villager was provided for by the Panchayat Act, and cities and towns by the amended Municipal Act

there still remained places which were not big enough for municipalities nor small and compact enough for village panchayats. For the benefit of small towns Fazl-i-Husain introduced the Punjab Small Town Act, 1921. It provided for the constitution of committees for small towns which could be entirely elected, and could also have an elected President. Communal electorates were not constituted in any small town committee, though as far as possible wards were so arranged as to ensure the return of members of different communities in proportion to their population and voting strength.

From the reform of Local Self-Government Fazl-i-Husain turned towards the Medical Department which he reorganised on the lines of Indianization, efficiency, and expansion. In the Punjab the higher ranks of the Medical Department had been reserved for I.M.S. Officers who were largely British. He reduced their number by nearly 50% and as a result of this example a number of similar posts were thrown open throughout India to officers of the Provincial Medical services, almost entirely Indian in their personnel. The Medical College had always been a preserve of British I.M.S. Officers. In order to encourage Indians from the profession Fazl-i-Husain started a scheme whereby clinical Assistants were appointed from among private practitioners so that in due course they could be promoted to the college staff.

Medical relief was extended in rural areas on an unprecedented scale. Prior to this, medical relief was administered mainly through the agency of local bodies, and missionary and charitable organizations. Fazl-i-Husain multiplied Government dispensaries, which increased at an average rate of twenty-five a year, and also inaugurated a comprehensive scheme for the expansion of medical relief. The scheme provided within five years sufficient dispensaries to bring the total number in each district upto one dispensary for every 100 square miles or for every 30,000 of the population. This involved the establishment of 375 new rural dispensaries, and by 1927, 205 such new dispensaries had already been built. Though many of them had been open

only for a few months, the number of patients treated by them during the year was not far short of a million and a half. The Public Health Department was also reorganized and expanded. Public Health work, hitherto divided between the Public Health Department and local bodies, was not done efficiently by either. Under a new scheme every district was provided with its own Medical Officer of Health and a Sanitary Inspector with a dispensary attached to the establishment.

As Minister in charge of religious endowments, Fazl-i-Husain had to deal with the Sikh agitation over the control and reform of their Gurdwaras. The followers of the militant doctrines of Guru Govind Singh looked askance at their shrines which had become rich by extensions of canal irrigation, and in 1919 founded the Sikh League with the alleged object of reform. Since Government afforded protection to the Mahants, who it was argued ought to be under the popular control of the Sikh community, the activities of the Sikh League became anti-Government. Under the guidance of their leader, Teja Singh, the reformist Sikhs suddenly seized the Akal Takht, the central shrine of the Sikhs adjoining the Golden Temple, and formed a new Committee of management called the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee. The Committee wanted to control all Gurdwaras and other Sikh religious institutions in the Punjab, and started a series of demonstrations by sending *Jathas* of Akalis with a view to capture the Sikh shrines. Gurdwaras all over the province were attacked by Akalis in quick succession, often with bloodshed when they came into conflict with the supporters of Mahants, or with the Police who protected the legal possession by the Mahants.

Fazl-i-Husain felt that the only way of meeting the legitimate grievances of the reforming Sikhs against the lazy, corrupt and dishonest Mahants, and at the same time of preserving the legal rights of the Mahants and of saving them from violence was to legislate immediately. The Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Act, 1922, was enacted. It provided for the management of notified Gurdwaras by the

Committees, and entrusted managers with the statutory duty of maintaining accounts. It also provided for the representation both of local worshippers and the *Panth* in the management of each shrine, and for the compensation of vested interests of existing managers whose services were dispensed with. In order to avoid ruinous litigation in expensive and dilatory civil courts a special tribunal was appointed to bring about compromises with regard to the administration and possession of scheduled Gurdwaras. The extremist reformist Sikhs wanted complete control of Gurdwaras and merciless liquidation of the Mahants. Fazl-i-Husain's legal mind revolted against any concession to violence,[1] and he carried through his legislation with Muslim and official support in the teeth of opposition by the Sikhs reinforced by urban Hindus who were desirous of making common cause with them against the alleged communal policy of Fazl-i-Husain. Irrespective of the merits of the Act, it is obvious that legislation against the wishes of the communities to which it related was a clear breach of the Lucknow Pact to which Fazl-i-Husain appealed in several other matters. All that can be said in favour of his policy is that the agitation caused acute administrative difficulties, which Government was anxious to remove. It was hoped that the vast majority of Sikhs would accept this legislation as a reasonably fair settlement. As a matter of fact, these hopes were disappointed. It looked as if on this occasion expediency rather that the Lucknow Pact was the determining factor. The passage of the Gurdwaras' Act of 1922, without the support of the Sikhs, could not be defended in principle, and in practice the Sikhs refused to work it.

The Akalis continued to agitate. When Sir Malcolm Hailey became Governor he was anxious to strengthen the Sikhs so that they might serve as a counterpoise to the growing strength of the Muslim majority in the Punjab under the leadership of Fazl-i-Husain. Government had persistently rejected the exaggerated and extra claims of the

[1] Note dated November 13, 1937 written by Sir Edward Maclagan for this book.

reformist Sikhs for nearly five years, but now suddenly changed its policy and offered to unsettle its settlement. Sir Frederick Puckle and Sir Herbert Emerson discussed terms of settlement with the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandak Committee. As a result of an agreement between Government and the Committee, the Sikh Gurdwara Act of 1925 was passed. The Act was a concession to the politically active section of Sikhs who served as the vanguard of anti-Muslim agitation. It banded the Sikhs against the Unionist Party and inspired them with new confidence in their strength under the leadership of Master Tara Singh. The Akalis organized themselves and strengthened the Shiromani Akali Dal, and with the power and the money which accrued to them under the Act led the anti-Communal Award agitation in the Punjab. Fazl-i-Husain protested in vain that the measure was iniquitous and unjust. Moderate Sikhs protested against financial and other powers being placed in the hands of selfish extremists. Other Sikhs protested against the funds of the Gurdwaras being spent for purely political purposes in fighting elections and other allied activities. Later, when disputes arose over the definition of the term 'Sikh,' and the community split into various sects, the majority of Sikhs realized that in repealing the Act of 1922 they had only helped to increase communal tension in the Punjab.

The cardinal principle of Fazl-i-Husain's policy as Revenue Member (1926-30) was the protection of the peasantry against Government demands and economic parasites, like the moneylenders. In view of the prevailing economic conditions this was the only sound policy that could be adopted by a progressive Minister. In 1921 the total agricultural debt in the Punjab amounted to 90 crores, and in 1929 the Punjab Banking Enquiry Committee thought it no less than 135 crores. The burden of interest alone amounted to Rs. 24.3 crores, while the average land revenue of the province was only Rs. 4 crores, and water rate Rs. 6½ crores. With falling prices, higher costs of labour, increase of Government dues, and a rising standard

of living, the burden of indebtedness was becoming too heavy for the peasantry to bear. In 1923 it was estimated that no less than 87% of the peasant proprietors were in debt to not more than 40,000 moneylenders.

Fazl-i-Husain regarded the Land Alienation Act of 1901 as the corner stone of his policy of protecting the peasant proprietor and relieving indebtedness. Since 1901 the Land Alienation Act had been severely criticized by Sir Shadi Lal and other leaders of the Punjab Hindu Sabha. The Punjab High Court gave two rulings which permitted the sale of land of an insolvent member of a notified agricultural tribe and permitted the alienation of land in execution of a decree for any number of years. Fazl-i-Husain immediately brought forward the Punjab Land Alienation (Amendment) Act to nullify the effect of both these rulings.

He then thought of helping the agriculturist by controlling the operations of moneylenders and the high rate of interest. He wanted all moneylenders to be registered but administrative difficulties obliged him to confine legislation to scrutiny of accounts. This was of great importance because the moneylenders made considerable gains by unscrupulous manipulation of accounts. While the moneylender could not be done away with as he had a definite function to fulfil in agricultural economy, and it was not a practical proposition to set up Rural Banks in every village at this stage of the economic development of the Punjab, the activities of the moneylenders could be regulated and placed on a basis of honesty and fair play. In 1926, with the concurrence of the Governor and the help of his party, Fazl-i-Husain passed the Punjab Regulation of Accounts Bill. It provided for the preparation of six monthly statements of accounts, and these statements were not to carry any presumption of correctness against the borrower, while the failure to keep accounts was subject to a penalty. Sir Malcolm Hailey inspite of his predecessor's commitments refused to allow this to be placed on the Statute Book and instead promised a Government measure, but when in 1929 a Government measure was introduced Fazl-

i-Husain found it defective in many respects. A 'loan,' for example, was limited to 'an advance not exceeding Rs. 100 in value.' Fazl-i-Husain protested against this as unacceptable to him and his party, and the restriction was removed. Similarly, he objected to the provision for the maintenance of a ledger for regularly recording and maintaining an account of transactions relating to loans for each debtor separately, because this provided loopholes for the moneylender to deceive the debtor. He substituted instead the compulsory maintenance of a *Roznamcha* which could not be falsified with the same facility.

As regards the exactions of Government, Fazl-i-Husain adopted a policy of thorough-going protection of the peasantry. Remissions of land revenue in bad years were given as a matter of course. "The land revenue payer," he said, "is a good paymaster if he had anything out of which he could make a payment. But when his crop was really hopeless it was only right that Government should come to his rescue and this without there being any strong agitation set afoot or trouble created for the authorities." In 1924-25, he strongly and boldly adopted this policy, which resulted in remissions of over a crore of rupees. When the province found itself in acute financial difficulties, in order to carry out the programmes of the beneficient Departments, he asked the peasantry to agree to an enhancement of the water rate, and they agreed. When later the time arrived for reducing the water rate, he was foremost amongst those who pressed the Government for reduction and in many cases succeeded in getting it reduced. Further, Government, as he saw it, should not only accord fair treatment to the peasant, but should actively assist him. He, therefore, revised the rates relating to grants of *Taqavi* loans and granted such loans on a liberal scale. Educated men were encouraged to take an interest and a pride in agricultural persuits, and a scheme for the creation of model villages and 'Graduate Chaks' in colony areas was introduced.

In 1928, Fazl-i-Husain secured the passage of the Punjab Land Revenue (Amendment) Act. The new Act placed

reassessment of land revenue on a statutory basis. It restricted the share of the State to a maximum of 25% of the net assets, and the measure of enhancement to a similar proportion in excess of assessment at the expiring settlement. Before this amending Act, the State could claim 50% of the net assets and enhance land revenue to an unlimited extent. The most important provision, was, however, the one which fixed forty years as the period of settlement. This was a great boon to the peasantry, who could now cultivate the land on a long term basis without fear of uncertain and repeated settlement operations and the perpetual anxiety of unlimited enhancement of the Government demand. Although the amending Act caused Government a loss of three crores over the full term of settlement Fazl-i-Husain regarded the relief afforded to the peasantry as vital and considered the sacrifice eminently worthwhile.

## CHAPTER IX

# *POLITICAL EVOLUTION UNDER CHELMSFORD REFORMS*

THE greatest contribution of Fazl-i-Husain during the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms' period was undoubtedly that which he made to the political evolution of the province. In view of the fact that the Punjab, politically undeveloped and immature, was still under the heel of the British bureaucrat, it was a remarkable feat to bring the province to a very great extent into line with other provinces in India. His contribution was twofold; firstly, in developing public opinion and accustoming the backward Punjabis to a popular system of Government; and secondly, in developing among the representatives of the people the best traditions of parliamentary practice and procedure. In connection with this second point he laid the foundation of a party system of Government so as to make democracy in the Punjab a reality.

The first Punjab Council, constituted in 1921, was composed of (besides twenty-three nominated officials and non-officials) seventy-one elected members, of whom thirty-five were Muslims, fifteen Sikhs and the rest Hindus and others. When the elections were held there was no party in existence, and most selections were made on personal grounds. Under the influence of the non-co-operation movement persons of extremist views refrained from participating in the elections. The residential qualification brought from rural constituencies mainly landed proprietors of moderate means, shrewd in practical matters, cautious, strongly imbued with conservative ideas, traditionally associated with the farmer class, anxious to pro-

mote the interests of the small yeoman and the landowning class, if necessary, at the expense of the townsmen. In view of this composition of the Council, Fazl-i-Husain was the first to grasp the fact that ultimately political power in the new Council must rest mainly with rural Muslim members, and he, therefore, immediately set himself to weld them into a united party.[1] All the Muslims steadfastly supported Fazl-i-Husain, and this fact assumed special importance because with the official bloc he could always command a majority in the Council. He formed a party of his own, which to begin with was known as the Rural Bloc but soon came to be known as the Rural Party. Although Muslims had been allotted 50% of the seats (which by itself could not give them a majority in the legislature on a purely communal basis), with the addition of seven special constituencies and nominated seats they were in a minority of 45.56%, which clearly indicated that no strong non-coalition ministry could be formed except on a non-communal basis.

The Rural Party, led by Fazl-i-Husain, though it primarily consisted of Muslims, soon attached to itself a few rural Sikhs and Hindus, who voted with the party when questions arose which affected broadly speaking rural as opposed to urban interests. The party from its inception recognized no caste, no creed and no colour, was open to all communities and included members who did not belong to the agricultural classes, members who did not live in rural areas, and members who did not pursue agriculture as a profession, but all subscribed to the principles of the party. The basic principle was to assist and encourage backward areas, backward classes, and backward communities. This principle included protection of the peasantry, particularly against the hated Hindu moneylender, and the extension of beneficent activities by Government to hitherto neglected rural areas; in other words, it meant the multiplication of rural dispensaries, primary schools, high schools, intermediate colleges, co-operative societies, rural veterinary dispensaries, agricultural farms, pancha-

[1] H. K. Trevaskis: *The Punjab of Today*, 1932, Volume II, p. 333.

yats and small town committees. Since Muslims, largely resident in rural areas, were backward in education and poorly represented on local bodies and in public services, they heartily supported this policy. Rural Hindus and Sikhs supported this policy for similar reasons.

"The formation of parties," said Fazl-i-Husain, "has taken the line of the 'have gots' and 'have nots,' with the result that there is a party existing of most of the Muslims and some of the landholding Hindus and Sikhs because these are the communities which have been more or less excluded by the 'have gots' who had enjoyed the monopoly of public services under the pre-reform administration. But for the communal epidemic, which is a reaction against the Hindu-Muslim unity of 1920-21, there would have been a clear and definite existence of a strong party of 'have nots' consisting of Muslims and Sikhs, and most of the Hindus." It is significant that Fazl-i-Husain avoided using the popular distinction of urban and rural. The fact is that in the ultimate analysis this distinction is very hard to maintain continuously, and besides, Fazl-i-Husain was aware, as he pointed out in the Legislative Council, that "as time goes on you will find that the distinction between rural areas and urban areas will tend to disappear." Before the Hunter Committee Fazl-i-Husain had accused Sir Michael O'Dwyer of attempting to minimize the importance of the educated classes by creating the distinction between the urban and the rural population. This, he added, was done by providing for them different constituencies for returning candidates to the Council, and also by making it a rule that no one from an urban area can stand outside that area to represent a rural area. He had opposed both measures and had urged that the urban and the rural people should not be politically segregated and placed in watertight compartments, and instead there should be perfect freedom between them. In later years he took pains to show that his policy was in no way directed against the urban population, and that several urbanites were prominent members of his party, and it is a fact that the programme of the party he founded was in no way consciously sectional. There is,

however, this to be said that propaganda on the basis of rural-urban differences was done and he never opposed it, and he also encouraged the view that the rural masses were as a class not in sympathy with the Congress urbanites, and to this extent his attitude was inconsistent.

The second Reformed Council, constituted in 1923, showed a marked political advance on the first. The abolition of the residential qualification offered a wider field of selection to rural constituencies, and representatives were now more progressive and united in pressing the claims of the rural classes. While the previous Council had no organized party except the Rural Party, the new Council differed from it in having also the Swaraj Party consisting of twelve members. The Punjab Swaraj Party had neither the following, nor the organization, nor the resources attained in other provinces. It was more urban and pro-Hindu than nationalist and was more a combination of the lawyer and trading classes as opposed to the rural and agricultural interests than a follower of the Congress programme. Fazl-i-Husain was re-elected by the same landholders constituency and utilized his old party to form what he now called the Punjab National Unionist Party. The formation of the party did not take place, as in the case of the Rural Party, after the elections in the Legislature; but some efforts were made to organize it before the elections. For the first time in the history of the Punjab an election manifesto was published and the electorate was asked to vote for party candidates rather than individuals. Except for three Khilafatists all the thirty-five Muslims joined Fazl-i-Husain's party, which was also joined by seven rural Hindus and Sikhs. Thus the Unionists formed a majority of thirty-nine against thirty-two, who formed the opposition, consisting of the Swrajists, Khilafatists, and individual Sikhs and Hindus. In this alignment the Unionist Party from the first showed a greater sense of cohesion and continuity than any other party in the legislature, and never allowed the Swaraj Party to produce incidents similar to those in the Central Legislature and other provincial legislatures. "Their

(Unionists) influence had a salutary effect on the Swarajists, who, in the language of the official report, were 'at first a destructive and later a more discriminating critic.' Before the Council was dissolved the policy of non-co-operation was as dead as a door nail."[1]

The position of Fazl-i-Husain was very strong *vis-à-vis* the Government, because the Government always depended for its majority on the united Muslim bloc which he firmly held in his grip. Fazl-i-Husain wanted to mobilize the different communities through their chosen representatives for joint prosecution of a common national programme and he was able to do so as long as he remained a minister. The educative effect of this process was perhaps even more important to him that its material effects. "It should be," he said, "the unity of political faith and belief which should be the determining factor as to who is to be in the party and who is not...if we are not to have a party on (this) principle, is there an alternative principle on which to form parties in the Council? One alternative is (as was the case in the pre-Reforms Council) parties formed on racial grounds. In that case the main plank of the political platform was anti-British. We cannot have parties on these lines in our present or future legislatures. If not, the other alternative is communal. That again, I need not discuss, because it is obviously highly undesirable to have parties on communal lines. If we rule out the racial basis, if we rule out the communal basis, what is left? No, we will place parties on the distinction of radical and conservative; most of us are anxious to get on and are there any who do not want to progress? Therefore, we must have from the very nature of things parties based on the principle I have enunciated, those who are for the weak, and backward, and those who are for the oligarchy of the already advanced. That to my mind, in the absence of any other political cleavage, is the basis on which parties can be reformed."[2]

[1] C. S. Ranga Iyer: *India: Peace or War*, 1930, p. 125.

[2] The aims and objects of the Unionist Party were *inter alia*:

'(1) To attain dominion status within the British Commonwealth of Nations by constitutional means at as early a date as possible;

The most outstanding result of the formation and alignment of parties in the second Council was the formation of a strong ministry and the inauguration of party Government on constitutional lines. At the first selection of ministers it was impossible to forecast the lines on which party feeling would range itself in the new Council, and the obvious course, therefore, was to select the two ministers from among the most popular and able leaders of public opinion in the two communities. Also, both Harkishan Lal and Fazl-i-Husain were front-rank pre-1920 Congress leaders, and could be said to follow in general the same programme and policy. Now that a distinct majority party had emerged, capable of merging communal distinctions in a common politico-economic programme, it was possible to consider the selection of ministers on a principle more strictly in accordance with constitutional requirements. Sir Edward Maclagan, who had acted constitutionally in making the first selection of

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(2) To demonstrate by a statesmanlike working of the Reforms that, given suitable opportunities and reasonable facilities, Indians are capable of shouldering the responsibilities of self-Government;

(3) To prove that constructive effort, if directed in a spirit of good will and earnestness to the working of Reforms, can produce results of greater benefit to the community than a pose of disdainful aloofness and destructive criticism;

(4) To provide equal opportunities of advance to all, and to direct, in an increasing measure, the beneficent activities of Government to backward classes and areas with a view to enabling them to make good the leeway produced by an ill-conceived or inadvertent policy of neglect in the past;

(5) To secure a fair distribution of the burden of provincial taxes between agricultural and other classes;

(6) To secure a just and fair representation of all classes and communities in the public services of the province;

(7) To check the exploitation of economically backward classes by economically dominant classes;

(8) To promote indigenous industries and to encourage the use of *Swadeshi* articles;

(9) To banish illiteracy from the province;

(10) To encourage a policy of decentralization;

(11) To encourage the growth of local self-governing institutions;

(12) To diminish litigation;

(13) To secure an economy in the administration;

(14) To suppress corruption and bribery;

(15) To promote temperance; and

(16) To preserve intact the Punjab Land Alienation Act as a measure of protection to backward classes." (*Vox Populi* Series, Vol. IV, 1932).

ministers, readily recognized the Unionist Party as the majority party in the Council, and forthwith reappointed Fazl-i-Husain as Minister of Education.[1] For his colleague, at his instance, he selected Lal Chand as Minister of Agriculture.[2] Lal Chand, a Jat agriculturist from Rohtak, was elected as a supporter of the Unionist programme and enjoyed the confidence of several rural Hindu members of the Council. With Fazl-i-Husain he presented in the Council a combination which could be said on most questions to represent the feelings of the predominant group in the Council. Further, there was, as the Governor pointed out in his speech at the first sitting of the second Council, a complete understanding between the two ministers on communal matters, and this was a source of strength to the ministry. Urban Mahasabhite Hindus protested against the selection of a Unionist rural Hindu as a minister. When this protest proved futile they encouraged the candidate defeated by Lal Chand and brought an election petition against the latter. They raised money by public subscription to which moneylenders contributed liberally. The election petition was successful, and Lal Chand was obliged to resign as minister. Sir Malcolm Hailey, who had just become Governor, was not ready to depart at once from the constitutional principle adopted by his predecessor on two previous occasions. At the instance of Fazl-i-Husain, he appointed Chaudhri Chhotu Ram, the co-founder of the Unionist Party, as minister.[3] From a political and constitutional point of view this was a great success for Fazl-i-Husain, and contributed in no small measure to the success of dyarchy in the Punjab. On the same principle when in the summer of 1925 Fazl-i-

[1] January 6, 1924.

[2] Fazl-i-Husain offered to form the ministry with Harkishan Lal but the latter did not seek re-election.

[3] Chaudhri Chhotu Ram was born in 1882; passed his B.A. in 1905 and worked as Assistant Private Secretary to Raja Rampal Singh (Oudh). In 1907 he wrote, *Village Life and How to Improve It*. In 1913 he was Secretary of the Jat Association, Rohtak. From 1916-24 editor of the *Jat Gazette*. During 1917-20 President of the District Congress Committee, Rohtak, but, resigned on non-co-operation issue. In 1923 helped in founding the Unionist Party and was leader of the Party from 1926 to 1936. In 1937 was appointed minister under provincial autonomy and continued as minister till his death in 1944.

Husain officiated as Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council for a few months he was replalced by Sir Abdul Qadir, an urbanite member of the Unionist Party. Thus Fazl-i-Husain overcame the obstacle of dyarchy and through forceful and successful tactics succeeded to a *gaddi* of very real power and influence.

Apart from this the so called urban versus rural distinction helped the Unionist Party.[1] The urbanites opposed three legislative measures, all of which were regarded by the ruralites as in their interests; namely, the Money-lenders Registration Bill, the Punjab Court Fees (Amendment) Bill, and the Punjab (Urban Property) Rent Regulation Bill. In reply Fazl-i-Husain said: "The extension of franchise has created a new political world; new forces have come into being, an upper section of the masses has come into its own and the educated classes, masters of the situation up till now find their position imperilled, their importance now being shared by a very large number of shareholders from amongst the masses whose only duty they had thought it was to follow them. It is this change in the political situation which the urban classes, urban educated classes, have not yet grasped." And indeed it was this very change which Fazl-i-Husain fully grasped and made use of. He, however, did not see the urban and rural cleavage as a class struggle because, once reviewing the work of the party, he said that "the key-words of that policy are 'backward' and 'assistance.' It is the business of the reformed Government to assist, encourage and help the backward areas, backward classes and backward com-

[1] The distinction of Urban *versus* Rural was in the programme rather than in the rules for membership or in the Muslim personnel of the party. Many urbanites and non-agriculturists were prominent members of the party. Sir Abdul Qadir, a non-agriculturist and an urbanite, for example, was not only a member but was unanimously elected by the party as Deputy President and later on, as President of the Assembly. In 1925, he officiated as Minister and later as Revenue Member in the leave vacancy of Fazl-i-Husain. Similarly, Sheikh Din Muhammad was a member and was put up as a Unionist candidate for Deputy Presidentship, and later on appointed Assistant Legal Remembrancer with the full support and goodwill of the National Unionist Party. Among members there were Dr. Iqbal, Mir Maqbool Mahmood, Sheikh Abdul Ghani, Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq, Khwaja Muhammad Yusuf and Sheikh Faiz Muhammad, all of whom were urban Muslims; only the non-Muslim members were strictly rural rather than urban.

munities. It has been said by some that this policy is anti-urban. Nothing could be more unfair than this criticism. This policy cannot be anti-urban when its object is not to pull back the advanced urban areas, but to try to push the backward rural areas on to the same level as the urban areas. It cannot be anti-urban because the object of this policy is not to stop the progress of urban areas by any means, but only this, that if there is a little money to be invested in further development and there are two rival schemes, one to promote the progress of urban areas and the other to give this first step towards advancement in the rural areas, the policy of the party has been to help the backward areas first. . . No urban area can for any length of time remain in a condition of prosperity if the condition of the rural areas continues to be bad. They are interdependent and to imagine that you can neglect the rural areas for any length of time and still go on remaining prosperous yourself is entirely unsound economics. This is what this party stands for, frankly and straightforwardly. There is nothing to conceal, there is nothing to be ashamed of. This is the policy which the Unionist Party stood for and still stands for. Its manifestations have been with reference not only to the budget and legislation, but it is in connection with this policy that the rural dispensaries came. It is in pursuance of this policy that high schools are to be found in places other than tehsil and district headquarters. It is in pursuance of this policy that you find Intermediate Colleges springing up throughout the province. Then look at the beneficent activities of the various Departments—Co-operative, Agriculture, Veterinary. They are being spread about the country in the same spirit. If all these things have done good to the province and I believe they have done good, a policy responsible for them cannot be said to be otherwise than good."[1]

This policy, however, could not be carried on for any length of time. Sir Malcolm Hailey,[2] came to rule and not to

[1] Reply to a Toast proposed by Chaudhri Chhotu Ram, *Vox Populi Series*, Volume I, 1930.

[2] Took over charge as Governor on May 31, 1924.

be a mere constitutional Governor. He did not want any one political party to dominate the politics of the Punjab. The Unionist Party was a party which aimed at communal unity, cut right across communal distinctions, held out a programme which appealed to the masses, and, on account of the balanced strength of the two communities in the Legislature, was the only party which could claim a substantial majority and support a stable ministry. A strong and stable ministry could wrest power from the hands of the Governor. He decided that it should not be allowed to develop.

Soon an incident occurred which revealed the strength of the Unionist Party as well as that of its leader, Fazl-i-Husain. Under the constitution of 1919 the first President of the Punjab Council was to be nominated by the Governor but he could be replaced by an elected representative in 1925. Butler, the first president, was succeeded by another Englishman, Casson. When Casson's term expired Sir Malcolm Hailey wanted that he should be re-elected. Those members of the Council who aspired to the office of President, namely, Sir Abdul Qadir (Deputy President of the Council), Mian Shah Nawaz and Dr. Gokal Chand Narang were sent for by Sir Malcolm and persuaded to withdraw their candidature. Some members like Nawab Mehr Shah and Syed Muhammad Husain presented a petition to the Governor asking for the retention of Casson as President. Sardar Jodh Singh, Raja Narendra Nath and some other urban Hindus, who wanted to check the growing strength of the Unionist Party, also offered their support to Casson. While these developments were taking place in Lahore Fazl-i-Husain lay seriously ill at Buchiana. When he received the news that the election of Casson was almost an accomplished fact he was greatly perturbed and against the advice of his doctors took the grave risk of immediately going to Lahore. On reaching Lahore he persuaded Sir Abdul Qadir and Mian Shah Nawaz not to withdraw in favour of Casson, and asked them to write to the Governor to that effect. He then saw Sir Malcolm and told him that an Indian

should be the President, and a Britisher, who could not be regarded as the representative of the people, should not be foisted on an Indian representative institution and it was against parliamentary principles not to have one of themselves as their President. Sir Malcolm knew that without the support of the Unionist Party he was powerless and unwillingly yielded. Fazl-i-Husain then proceeded to effect a compromise between Sir Abdul Qadir and Mian Shah Nawaz because a three-cornered contest might have proved disastrous to the Unionist candidates. Mian Shah Nawaz withdrew in favour of Sir Abdul Qadir, who was elected President getting forty-one votes as against thirty-two obtained by Dr. Gokal Chand Narang. When Sir Abdul Qadir resigned, on his appointment as minister in 1925, he was succeeded by Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din, who continued to be President till 1936.[1] After the election, Raja Narendra Nath and his colleagues of the Mahasabha did not hesitate to convince the Governor of the advantages that would accrue to him by weakening the Unionists and strengthening the Mahasabha.

Sir Malcolm Hailey, with a determination to weaken the growing power of the Unionist Party vetoed the Registration of Moneylenders Bill and obstructed the passage of the Land Revenue (Amendment) Bill, both of which were among the most important items on the programme of the Unionist Party. He dealt his most important blow to the party in 1926 in the appointment of ministers on the reconstitution of the Council. He made Fazl-i-Husain Revenue Member.[2] This obviated the neces-

[1] Firoz Khan Noon recorded:

"When the statutory period of four years for the first nominated President was over, a President had to be elected by the Council. The officials had put up Casson. They had canvassed support for him. I also promised him my support. Fazli felt that he would be disgraced in the country, if, while he was minister, the Council failed to select a non-official President. Sir Abdul Qadir was not willing to come forward as a candidate for fear of defeat, but he obeyed Sir Fazli's commands. All of us who were in Fazli's party and his supporters, the moment we realized what his wishes and orders were, we said *Jo hukum* and said good-bye to all previous promises. The man is a born leader. Abdul Qadir was elected, Fazli's honour was saved, thereafter a non-official has always continued to be elected. We realize now that Fazli was right. It was a question of principle."

[2] Apparently the Governor outmanouvred Fazl-i-Husain who accepted office without resisting it.

sity for Fazl-i-Husain to seek re-election; he was nominated, which detracted from his position as a representative of the people. Now that he was relegated to the reserved half of the Government he was no longer the popular leader in the Council. Hitherto, while leading the majority party in the Council, Fazl-i-Husain, with the support of the official bloc, had obtained the final voice not only in his own department, but in the departments of his colleagues and in shaping almost the entire policy of the Government of his day. Sir Malcolm withdrew the support of the official bloc from the majority party and thereby controlled the balance of power.

This was not all. The formation of the new ministry was unconstitutional in so far as it did not represent the alignment of parties in the Council. Sir Malcolm wanted to encourage the Mahasabhites, and appointed Manohar Lal, an urban Hindu, as minister. The mere fact that he was an urban Hindu was not objectionable, because Harkishan Lal had after all been an urban Hindu; but what mattered was that Manohar Lal was opposed to the Unionists. Throughout 1921-23 Manohar Lal had left no stone unturned to oppose Fazl-i-Husain's policy and his appointment was obviously likely to reverse all that had been done by Fazl-i-Husain. The repercussions of the appointment were even more far reaching in the political field. It threw overboard the principle of party Government, divided ministerial offices among the communities as such, and thereby divided the Council into communal blocs. The constitutional position of Manohar Lal was anomalous in that he had no support except that of the National Reform Party, consisting of nine members, which sat in opposition to Government as well as to the Unionist Party. In order to help him Sir Malcolm gave him the support of the official bloc, thereby confusing political grouping in the Council.

Similarly, Sardar Jogendra Singh, Minister of Agriculture, was not a Unionist, in fact belonged to no party whatever, and had to find support from among the Unionists because the Sikh members as a whole refused to support

him. The absence of a Muslim minister decreased the cohesion of Muslims in their support of the Unionist Party. Later, when a Muslim minister was appointed, the position of the Unionists did not substantially improve, because they were neither in power nor out of it. A party which up to 1926 had shown a high level of discipline now suffered from lack of it. During 1926-30 there was restiveness in the party, and its internal differences became public. More than once party whips were disregarded by various groups of the Unionists. On one occasion a Unionist minister was opposed by his party openly on the floor of the House. The progress of the Unionist Party, which Fazl-i-Husain intended should function as a symbol of intercommunal co-operation in pursuit of common national objectives, received a serious set back. Indeed it was surprising that the party still held together in spite of everything. This shows the tenacity with which Sir Chhotu Ram, the successor of Fazl-i-Husain as leader of the party, faced adverse circumstances and held together the crippled party. By asking Sir Malcolm to replace him (Fazl-i-Husain) as minister by the leader of the Unionist Party (incidentally a non-Muslim), Fazl-i-Husain wanted to shift the plane of Punjab politics from personalities and communalism to that of political principles, but the new Governor refused.

Fazl-i-Husain was, however, not one to be defeated easily. The Unionist Party agitated for representation in the ministry, and he pointed out that the Muslims had been put in a weak position; as long as the Hindus and Sikhs formed a ministry, it was impossible for the Muslims to defeat either the Hindus or the Government. The wishes of thirty-five Muslims members out of seventy-four elected members were thus being disregarded. When Sir Malcolm found the demand for Unionist representation irresistible, he appointed Firoz Khan Noon, a rural Muslim Unionist, as a minister.

The appointment of a Unionist as minister helped the party, but the essential weakness in the working of the party system remained. In the first Council the two ministers, though belonging to different communities,

generally found no difficulty in agreeing on common action; in the second Council both ministers belonged to the Unionist Party; but in the third Council one belonged to the Unionist Party, one to the Hindu Mahasabha party, and one to no party at all. Sir Malcolm's assumption was that individual members of the ministry need not have common views, and might even have diametrically opposite views on important questions. This made it difficult to maintain unity of action, and the fact that Sir Malcolm did not hold joint consultations with ministers made matters worse; private consultations were impossible because the ministers did not belong to one party. In fact, friction was inevitable since the Unionist minister and the Mahasabha minister held antagonistic views on economic and political questions of primary importance to the province. Under the circumstances it was but natural that the ministry should have no sense of joint responsibility but should be weak, vacillating and, as against the Governor, impotent.

The tradition of forming non-party ministries, once established, continued and militated against the development of a vigorous party system. At the next and the last general election under the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms in 1930, the strength of the Unionist Party decreased to thirty-six members, of whom only three were non-Muslims, thereby losing much of its non-communal character. The National Progressive Party under the leadership of Raja Narendra Nath gained strength and increased its membership to twenty. The new Governor, Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency, appointed Sir Jogendra Singh (non-party), Firoz Khan Noon (Unionist) and Dr. Gokal Chand Narang (National Reform) as ministers, and appointed Sir Sikander Hyat Khan as Revenue Member. Thus, while the first ministry was Congress (liberal), and the second was Rural (Unionist), the third and fourth were non-party (communal) ministries.

Whatever success Fazl-i-Husain achieved was, therefore, remarkable, for the number of difficulties that stood in his way and that of his party were numerous. The Reforms had been launched in an atmosphere of agitation and

bitterness engendered by the general non-co-operation campaign accentuated by Jallianwala Bagh and the painful memories of Martial Law Administration. Later, Gurdwara agitation and the programme of the Swaraj Party to wreck the constitution added to the existing background of growing communal strife, of political disorder, and of economic depression.[1] The complications and contradictions implicit in the Dyarchic experiment, especially when the constitution had to be worked by the politically inexperienced Punjab, made matters still more difficult. The division of subjects into Transferred and Reserved was arbitrary, and was conceived in such a way that the ministers were never in full control of any single subject. The division of functions were not made in such a way as to give the Transferred Departments autonomy within their own spheres. This enabled Reserved Departments constantly to interfere with and encroach upon the functions of the Transferred Departments. To this was added interference by the Government of India in matters which mainly concerned Local Governments. Assent to two bills sponsored by Fazl-i-Husain and his party was withheld in spite of the fact that they dealt with Transferred Subjects.

One of the greatest problems was financial control. The ministers responsible to the legislature were entrusted with nation-building or beneficent departments (or what may be called spending departments) which included agriculture, industry, education, public health, and communications, all of which required mounting expenditure, while the expenditure sanctioning and revenue producing departments were under two members not responsible to the Legislature. While ministers could not explore ways and means of increasing revenue, the Finance Member could cut down or give as much money to the Transferred Departments as he liked. To make matters worse the Punjab started the Reforms with a deficit of Rs. 205 lakhs and bad harvests reduced land revenue from Rs. 3 to 2½ crores, and the temperance campaign reduced excise

[1] H. M. Dodwell: *India*, 1936, p. 233.

receipts by another half crore. Fazl-i-Husain, as minister in charge of vitality important spending departments, saved his policy from disaster by economising and by drawing upon his credit with the Council and his party to secure additional taxes.

The growth of party system was hampered by the constitution. The members were elected on programmes which embraced not merely the subjects under the administration of the ministries, but also those under the reserved half. Again, the ministers as leaders of a party could not in important matters voice party opinion, or even give a lead to their followers on matters affecting the reserved side. Thus a minister could vote with his colleagues on the reserved side and suffer defeat along with them, while his party could be victorious. With regard to ministerial responsibility, the Punjab Governors tended to restrict both individual and collective responsibility. The Governors used the official bloc to retain a majority vote for an unpopular minister; Mahasabha representatives like Manohar Lal and Dr. Gokal Chand Narang were kept in office against the wishes of the Unionist Party wielding a majority in the Council. Another aspect of ministerial responsibility is the ability of the legislature to review the work of the ministers, but this was denied by official Presidents, who refused facilities for discussion. Fazl-i-Husain, however, saw the solution in having a non-official President, and was successful in getting one elected in 1925.

One of the foremost problems of the post-Reform era was the adjustment of the new relationship between Indian ministers and permanent British civilians, who were loath to recognize Indians as their superiors in any position. The Punjab I.C.S. Officers, largely British, were particularly averse to taking orders from an Indian minister and a considerable number of them retired on proportionate pension and chose to return to England rather than serve under those politically minded Indians whom until recently they had treated with contempt. Those who remained behind had the satisfaction that the care of their interests was the statutory responsibility of the Governor, and as this res-

ponsibility was being interpreted by the Punjab Governor in the widest possible terms they could afford to disregard, when they pleased, the orders or the advice of the popular ministers. In one or two cases British officials complained, took legal advice and threatened Harkishan Lal with the opinion of the Government of India and a reference to the Secretary of State. The Chief Secretary was the most powerful individual in the Government. He had free access to the Governor whom he saw and to whom he explained all important cases before the minister could speak to the Governor. All over India, Indian ministers and members of the Executive Council expressed their helplessness against the all powerful permanent British civilians.

Fazl-i-Husain, while recognizing the weakness of the constitutional position of ministers *vis-a-vis* I.C.S. Officers, maintained a self-respecting attitude towards them and refused to be disobeyed with impunity. He treated British officers with reserve and strict formality, though not without courtesy. While there was no question of his being unduly impressed by British officers merely because they happened to belong to the ruling race, he never went out of his way to insult or to injure them. Sir Edward Maclagan recognized this by saying: "In his relations with his subordinates there were one or two clashes, both with Europeans and with Indians, but Mian Fazl-i-Husain, after stating his case, was always ready to make allowances and in some instances he showed considerable magnanimity."[1]

In 1929 Government decided to make certain remissions of land revenue in Gujranwala District, and Fazl-i-Husain as Revenue Member proposed to Sir Malcolm Hailey that he should announce them in a Durbar to be held at Gujranwala. Sir Malcolm agreed and Fazl-i-Husain accordingly wrote to F. W. Kenneway, I.C.S., the Commissioner of Lahore Division, to make arrangements for the Durbar and be present himself. Kenneway could not countenance the idea of an Indian presiding at a Durbar where he was asked to be present and refused to come, whereupon Fazl-i-Husain demanded his resignation for

[1] Note dated November 13, 1937, written by Sir Edward Maclagan.

refusal to obey orders of Government. Since Sir Malcolm had previously agreed to the holding of a Durbar he was obliged to support his minister, as a result of which, it is said, Kenneway prematurely resigned from service.

In 1924, two nominations had to be made to the District Board of Montgomery, and the Deputy Commissioner, a British I.C.S. officer, made recommendations which were supported by the Commissioner of Multan Division. Fazl-i-Husain, as Minister in charge of local bodies, nominated Subedar-Major Fazal Dad Khan and Syed Said Muhammad Shah, Diwan of Pakpattan, instead of those recommended by the Deputy Commissioner, who protested and said that he did not consider either of those nominated suitable, and added that he "strongly deprecated Government lending itself to such backstairs' attempts to go behind the recommendations of a Deputy Commissioner for membership of his District Board."

Fazl-i-Husain objected to this attitude on grounds of principle and pointed out that the Deputy Commissioners considered District Board nominations more or less as rewards for the services rendered in the preservation of peace and order or, as critics of Government put it, for political service, and this was obviously an abuse of the Local Self-Government Department and as well as responsible for the failure of Local Self-Government in rural areas. "It is," he said, "the man who either is a title bearer or a *bater* or *machliwala* who gets nominated to the chagrin of better qualified and more deserving candidates. Assistance to administration was only one of the qualifications for determining a person's suitability, and certainly not the only one or the most important one. Government was responsible for appointments to the District Board and it was perfectly legitimate for the minister to go behind the recommendations of the Deputy Commissioner and in fact the minister's responsibility to Council would be meaningless if he were bound to accept a Deputy Commissioner's recommendations. Further, if the Deputy Commissioner loses the Local Self-Government functions in those of a District Magistrate or the Deputy Commissioner, who is

responsible for peace and order, it is impossible for a minister to attach any great weight to his opinions. The Deputy Commissioner as a functionary of the Local Self-Government has to carry out the policy of the minister, and cannot be tolerated to subordinate the Local Self-Government work to his other work."

Secondly, with regard to the reference to Government (in this case the minister) lending itself to backstairs' influence Fazl-i-Husain said that no one had spoken to him about these men, nor had they spoken to him about the District Board or themselves, and even if they had, there was, considering the responsibility of the minister to the legislature, nothing objectionable in it. He added that if the officer did not make satisfactory amends he would be removed from the Chairmanship of the District Board. Sir Edward Maclagan agreed with Fazl-i-Husain and the Deputy Commissioner was asked to withdraw his letter and to apologize for having written it, which he accordingly did.

The effect of all the difficulties, that have been pointed out, was that the success of the Reforms was not so great as Fazl-i-Husain and his colleagues had desired. Nevertheless he achieved as much as was possible under the circumstances. It seems that in the period 1926-30 the British managed to disrupt the growth of highly promising popular forces first organized under the Reforms. Obviously they could not afford to let that promising beginning continue, and by diverse ways and means sought to disorganize the movement, but on account of Fazl-i-Husain's activities their success though considerable was not as great as they had looked forward to. British administrators, like Sir Malcolm Hailey, belittled the success achieved and tried to convince the Simon Commission that no further political advance was necessary for the Punjab. In support of this contention they pleaded communal dissensions and inefficiency in administration. Fazl-i-Husain refused to regard the so called communal dissensions as a valid objection to constitutional advance; and with regard to the alleged inefficiency of administration under the Reforms, he said:

"There has been no deterioration of standards in administration and all that happened was that the Reforms Scheme brought out public voice, voice of the electorate, voice of the representatives of the elctorate, and their voice naturally gave expression to their complaints relating not only to the policy of various departments but also relating to the way in which officials of various departments worked. Therefore from the increase in the volume of complaints it could not be understood that the evils had come into being with the Reforms Scheme. The fact was that the general development in the Transferred subjects had been unprecedented during any period of pre-Reform Government and though it was possible to argue that the same could have been done, had the administration got itself to accomplish it without the Reforms, yet the fact was that they had never got themselves to achieve it. Under the Reforms great success was achieved by the political awakening of the countryside and the responsive character of Government to meet the demands of the people...."

One of the greatest contributions of Fazl-i-Husain to to political evolution was a greater measure of parliamentary development in the Punjab than was noticable in some other provinces in India. The Reforms brought devolution of some power from the authorities into the hands of elected representatives whose voice under the Reforms acquired a weight it had never commanded before. In order to derive full advantage from the Reforms it was necessary that public opinion should be organised and directed to think politically and along lines of party Government.

The foundation of the Unionist Party ensured the development of the party system of Government in the Punjab in spite of a large number of factors which militated against it. Non-co-operation prevented the Hindus, and the Gurdwara agitation prevented the Sikhs from following normal party lines. The existence of the official bloc and the power vested in the Governor to choose ministers not on party lines but for communal reasons interfered

with the working and development of parties. Nevertheless, in the Punjab, the hostility felt by agriculturists for the monied and urban interests tended towards the formation of prejudices and interests which served as a basis for political parties. Even the opponents of Fazl-i-Husain admitted that "the outstanding contribution to the development of responsible Government is undoubtedly that of Sir Fazl-i-Husain. One may not agree with everything that he has done, he has demonstrated the power and capacity of his countrymen to handle the administrative machinery."[1]

Other provinces did not derive the same advantage from the Reforms as the Punjab did in developing a system of parliamentary Government. For example, in Madras, Bengal and C.P. till 1924 there were no signs of division into parties. The principle of collective ministerial responsibility which worked satisfactorily in the Punjab during 1923-26 was not recognized in any province though the Governors in Madras and C.P. tended to encourage it. After 1924 Madras was the only other province in India where a regular party (i.e. Justice Party)[2] with a constructive economic programme was in existence. The only other well organized party in India was the Swaraj Party, whose main object was organized obstruction of Government machinery. They had absolute majority in C.P. and Bengal during 1924-27 and made administration of transferred subjects impossible. Only in the Punjab and Madras did party system of Government make a constructive contribution to the welfare and progress of the masses.

In working the Reforms, Fazl-i-Husain was deeply conscious of the need to evolve a true democratic spirit in the Punjab. "People forget," he said, "that once a Congressman, always a Congressman. Those who remain within the fold of Congress may forget their principles. But those who leave the Congress cannot afford to do that, because, after

[1] Memorandum submitted by the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Lahore, to the Simon Commission, 1928.

[2] In Madras the non-Brahmin Hindus united in the Justice Party to challenge the old-established supremacy of the Brahmin oligarchy; and the result was a straight parliamentary conflict on domestic issues between, so to speak, a party of the Left and a party of the Right.

all, a few principles of the Congress are the only things left with them. There is no dictatorship, no autocracy, nothing of the kind. They hug a few principles to their hearts and they cannot afford to let them go. My friends, much to my disappointment and regret, have indulged in bare-faced poetic exaggerations about me. To put it very briefly, a few years hence when a good research scholar comes into being and begins to write the history of the Punjab under the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms (the first Parliament of ten years) when dealing with me, if he is at all sensible, what he will say will be: 'here was a second-rate man and possibly a third-rate man hustled into the first rank and to the foremost place in the first rank not because he deserved to be there, not because there was any thing special in him, but because some misguided opponents of his made it their business to put him there.' (Laughter) I assure my friends that there is absolutely nothing wonderful in me. A man's policy or work consists in methods; my method was not different from the method of all those men who in 1919-20 felt themselves unable to subscribe to the Congress creed of non-co-operation and I was one of the many who had the courage to say so. I have not the slightest doubt that there were hundreds of thousands of others who were with us but who perhaps lacked the courage to say so. Therefore, so far as my method is concerned, there was nothing wonderful about it. If I may lay some claim, it consists in being tenacious enough to act up to my own convictions and not to be led away because some strong minded people would have it otherwise. Still, that is not a thing which raises you to any very great height of glory. Then comes the question of principles and that is the most important thing. I assure you that I evolved no new principles. There is no touch of genius about me. Perhaps they were the principles that I, along with a large number of Congressmen, set out and decided to adopt. Is there a Congressman who does not hold the view that the development of a country, the success of a country, the greatness of a country depends upon the progress of all parts of the country?

Is there a Congressmen who does not hold the view that as long as large tracts in India disfigure the name of India by being called backward tracts, no Indian can stand up and raise his banner high? There is no new principle in it. Is there a Congressmen who holds the view that by placing facilities in large cities and concentrating political action in those cities, you are not really giving the country liberty but you are making the mistake of creating a class to rule over another class, a larger class but a poorer class and therefore a class which is bound to have the better of you later on? There again, I claim that I was not the author of these principles. I simply adopted them. I simply took them from my friends. I further claim that had any other Congressman adopted the method I adopted and tried to carry out the Congress programme he could not have done otherwise than I did."

"Then comes the question of execution. There I must say that my methods of execution differed a little from those of the Congress of recent years. In the first decade of the 20th century, those working in the Congress were of the view that political work in the country should proceed by consultation, by discussion and by educating our fellow-workers. Is assure you, this is a tedious and troublesome work. It takes you days and days to get through a work, but if you were a dictator, you could do it in five minutes. If the Congress of today believes in dictators, I never did and I do not. I remember having spent hour after hour, from early morning till late in the night, getting in close touch with my friends, about the Panchayat Bill, about the District Board's Amendment Bill, about the Municipal Amendment Bill, about the Town Improvement Bill and no end of Bills. I have a very vivid recollection that in my party were those who were illiterate, some could write their names and others could not do even that. I remember there were amongst them saints as well as sinners. I remember very well that it took me a very long time to bring the most backward members of the party up to the average level. It was a revelation to me that a great deal of common sense was to be found amongst those who

were not blessed either with degrees in Arts and Science or even with a matriculation certificate. I have before me the vision of a member of our party who came from Rohtak. I remember Chaudhri Ghasi Ram with the flowing beard, just as long as my garland, and you could see from his signature that it was all that he could do. But I assure you that his level of knowledge of the affairs of the world as well as his intelligence were not below those of the average of the people in the Hall. I had the greatest respect for him. There was another man, Chaudhri Tek Ram. He was a terrible man; faced four trials for murder and got off every time; faced an equal number of murderous assaults and it was the last one which cost him his life. Those who were familiar with him knew his sterling qualities. It was a wrench, a personal loss to me, when I heard that he fell a victim to a murderous assault which he had apprehended and which to my regret I was not able to prevent. I am telling you this because I see a very great danger in the political life of this country today when leaders want to take shortcuts, instead of having discussion and debate, with the object of arriving at decisions. They take upon themselves the dictatorship, lay down the law and everybody must obey them. The reason why I was able to make friends and keep them together was that I invariably tried to convince them and have their views and not dictate to them. I think nowadays too much is made of divine gifts of leadership. There is no such thing. But those who work hard, discuss and debate with their friends, I have not the slightest doubt, will succeed in securing a certain amount of agreement, and that is really the work that can last for sometime. I trust all those who take interest in the political work of this country and those who are engaged in any work other than political, say educational or social work, will adopt this method of convincing their friends by means of argument and not lay stress upon the need of implicit obedience to whatever they choose to say. It will be all to the good of this country. I see no difference between the autocracy or dictatorship of

a political leader outside the Government and the autocracy of Nadir Shah."[1]

Fazl-i-Husain believed in and worked throughout his political career for the popularisation of democracy as opposed to autocracy and dictatorship. He believed in persuasion rather than in coercion for achieving political ends. For him ends did not justify means. He believed the human spirit amenable to reason, and did not want to debase his countrymen by using force or appealing to cheap emotions. He did not wish to adopt the easier methods of the demagogue; instead he laboured along the difficult and tortuous path of educating his countrymen to cultivate reason, toleration and mutual understanding. He believed in individual liberty and the sacredness of the human personality, neither of which could flourish except under the protection of democratic institutions. He was prepared to sacrifice immediate gains provided he was not building on sand, and could help his country to develop liberty and democracy which he had learnt to cherish during his student days in England.

What Fazl-i-Husain did in the Punjab during 1921-30 can be more fully appreciated with reference to what happened in the rest of India during this period. Non-co-operation failed and the cry for Council entry was raised. It was now accepted among Congressmen that a successful revolution by force was unthinkable, that physical resistance did not enter into practical politics, that to hope for voluntary abandonment of their rule by the British was mere moonshine, and that a consistent life of detachment and renunciation could not get them a place in the sun. The revolutionary programme on which the Congress embarked in 1921, and which obliged Fazl-i-Husain to dissociate himself from it, did not produce the results expected of it. After the failure of the Civil Disobedience movement of 1930 the Congress gradually abandoned all that it had advocated and almost turned back to what the

[1] Reply to a speech delivered by Chaudhri Chhotu Ram. *Vox Populi Series*, Volume I, 1930.

Moderates of 1920 had stood for. In the Punjab Fazl-i-Husain stood for the pre-non-co-operation programme of the Congress and after ten years of power in his province he was able to say: "I formulated no new political creed; I simply tried in my own humble way to carry out what I understood at the time when I was in the Congress, was the Congress programme (hear! hear!). We in the Congress before the Reforms stood out for what? To help the backward. Is there one who is familiar with the Congress programme of the pre-Reform days who does not recognise that our one ambition was to go into the country and serve the people? Was it not a fact that we wanted to bring the blessings of education and medical relief to the countryside. I myself contributed in those days a sum for political propaganda to the Congress fund, for taking these views to the countryside. What did I do as a minister? Nothing more than carry out the Congress programme that had been formulated before the Reforms. I venture to assure the members of the party that they have done more in the Punjab in carrying out the Congress programme, than has been done in any other part of India (hear! hear!). Not only that...*Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal*—The old programme? *The Hon'ble Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain—yes*, the old programme, the nation-building programme, the constructive programme, which for the time being seems to have been neglected for the sake of a more showy programme. Therefore, remember that if some advanced politician, some platform politician gibes at you that you are not in the battle line of India's war of independence you can tell them that you have been and are rather busy in building up India, and as soon as you have done that, no war will be needed to be independent. You can tell them that you prefer to work while they prefer to speak. I have no doubt that if in other provinces the political parties had taken up the carrying out of the sort of programme that you have done in the Punjab, India on the whole would have been much better off today than it is (hear! hear!). You have laid the foundations of good sound vernacular education

throughout the province. This is not what can be stated about Bengal, and selfless workers will have to work hard for at least ten to twenty years in Bengal before they can have sound foundations laid for population education."

"The Punjab today is full of life, full of activity and full of sacred discontent. I consider that a great achievement of the Reforms scheme during the last ten years. People today whether in the district boards, or in the panchayats, or in small town committees take a much more independent and active interest in their work than they used to do before. The mental horizon is broadened; the political mind of the province has developed a great deal already and I have not the slightest doubt that whatever the nature of the new Reforms may be, that development is going to continue and no power can stop that growth."[1]

[1] Reply to the Toast proposed by Sir Chhotu Ram, *Vox Populi Series*, Volume VI. 1932.

## CHAPTER X

# *COMMUNALISM VERSUS NATIONALISM*

THROUGHOUT his ministership Fazl-i-Husain was one of the most misrepresented politicians of his time in India. For the sheer amount of publicity that he obtained he left other provincial ministers far behind; but he was famous not so much for what he was, as for what he was not. The Punjab Press created a legendry Fazl-i-Husain, a thorough going religious fanatic, a hater of Hindus, anxious to keep the two communities divided and constantly pursuing the destruction of the Hindu community and the establishment of Muslim Raj in the country. Professor Gulshan Rai, General Secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha, wrote a series of articles in the *Tribune* severely criticising the alleged communal policy of Fazl-i-Husain. Hindus and Sikhs, he said, were being trampled underfoot by a bigoted communal Muslim minister and the interests of the minorities in the Punjab were prejudiced. He was the apostle of communalism, the high priest of separatism, the cause of every Hindu-Muslim riot that took place in India, the author of an anti-Hindu conspiracy between himself and the British, and the Chinese wall between the freedom and the slavery of India. The campaign of misrepresentation excelled in sheer audacity. He was accused of being the author of the principle of communal representation, of having extended it to the recruitment of public services, to local bodies and to educational institutions. The truth is, of course, that the principle was already well established in all these spheres before he came into power and all he did was to give effect to the principle according to the settled policy of Govern-

ment. Yet the Hindus and Sikhs complained bitterly to the Muddiman Committee and later to the Simon Commission against the so called communal policy of Fazl-i-Husain.

Fazl-i-Husain did not attach much importance to communal disturbances as a factor separating the Muslims and Hindus. He strongly objected to the official view that "communal dissensions have led to open disorder and the Reforms Scheme is partly responsible for it." In his evidence before the Simon Commission he said: "Communal dissensions are not of recent origin having existed in the eighties, but they look large in the public eye nowadays because the present day means of publicity are incomparably greater than they were in the past. They do not warrant the inference that the antagonism between the communities is real, deep-seated and everlasting. During 1922-27 communal disturbances in the Punjab were confined to eight towns and even in these towns during serious disturbances only a fraction of the population was directly affected. Communal riots constituted but an insignificant proportion of the ordinary riots which were due to other causes:—

| Year | Ordinary | Communal |
|---|---|---|
| 1922 | 760 | 2 |
| 1923 | 757 | 4 |
| 1924 | 960 | 2 |
| 1925 | 802 | 2 |
| 1926 | 660 | 2 |
| 1927 | 797 | 2 |

In my opinion to argue about communal dissensions on the basis of actual riots and violent outbursts misses the true import of the problem. Eruptions of this kind and breaches of peace are bound to be occasional, but what is significant is the ease with which these explosions have taken place recently, apparently without any occasion whatsoever, as also, and this to my mind is even more important, the increasingly tense state of feeling between the two major communities in the province as evidenced by the Press and the platform. The importance of these two propagandist agencies cannot be minimized for they

constitute the vocal and therefore necessarily the determining factors in the political life of the country. It is true that the virulence of this propaganda has not succeeded in creating widespread disturbances as such, but it is undoubted that it has been successful in producing real tension of feeling and caused much loss of mutual goodwill and trust; the relations between the two communities are, as I view the actual position, more strained now then during any period in the recent history of the province. The leaders of political thought and activity have not been able, in spite of their desire for unity for they realize that without it genuine political advance is not possible, to establish any harmony or amity or break down the intensity of this feeling. Communal dissensions relating to vilifying the prophets and saints of other religions were found in part at least to be due to the long delays of courts of law and defective law to deal with them. At present much effort is directed to bend politics to the real or supposed claims of religious and sectional interests. But I do not wish to dogmatise. Time may generate a truer appreciation of the significance of self-Government and the implications of a democratic form of Government, and I agree that with the political evolution of India communal dissensions have to be a disappearing phase, and it is a happy sign that the best of our leaders are fully conscious of the imperative need of unity."[1]

Fazl-i-Husain was said to have fermented communal dissensions more than any other person in the Punjab. The fact was that the Reforms threw open various services, local bodies, and the legislature, all of which had hitherto been closed, and there was a natural desire among Muslims and Hindus to secure as much representation in them as possible. There was also a feeling that since the Reforms indicated a certain withdrawal of British authority, and a future complete withdrawal was within sight, no one community should be allowed to dominate the other as a ruling authority in place of the British. There was resentment on the part of the Hindus at the loss

[1] An undated note written by Fazl-i-Husain.

of the predominant position they had hitherto enjoyed; and fear on the part of the Muslims who did not wish to lose what little they had gained under the Reforms. Mahasabha opponents of Fazl-i-Husain never ceased to attribute every evil to him. Their fears seem to be confirmed when some of those in authority said that after all what Fazl-i-Husain did was not unreasonable for a Muslim minister. He was merely attempting, they added, to secure opportunities for the community whose representatives constituted his chief support in the Council. This made people feel that it was not only an attempt to raise the majority community, backward in education and political status, to the level of its rivals, but that it implied an attack on Hindu interests to appease exaggerated Muslim demands.

Fazl-i-Husain had not only to defend his policy against Mahasabha onslaughts, but also to try and ensure that it was not misrepresented by the British in order to bolster up communalism as an argument against constitutional advance. In the official report of the Punjab Government for the use of the Simon Commission, Sir Malcolm Hailey emphasised that communal bias had increased under the Reforms, and that appointments, including those arising from the rapid pace of Indianization in certain departments, were made for political and communal reasons rather than with an eye to departmental efficiency. He added that the ministers were compelled to act in this way by party and communal considerations. Fazl-i-Husain regarded this view as entirely unfounded, and a serious reflection on him and his colleagues, and wanted his strong dissent to be incorporated in the Provincial Government Report. Sir Malcolm Hailey refused to agree to this, though eventually on the insistence of Fazl-i-Husain he conveyed his views separately to the Simon Commission. Fazl-i-Husain, speaking for all departments for which he was responsible, pointed out that no Indianization was carried out to adjust communal inequalities. He added that in departments administered by the Governor directly and in recruitment to administrative services such as "the Provincial Civil Service, greater attention had been paid

to communal and political considerations than in any other department. As regards communal considerations the very fact that it was one department wherein Muslims and non-Muslims were in fairly equal number indicated that from the very beginning the communal aspect of appointments had been kept in view, and when it is remembered that a quarter of a century ago it was not so easy to get educated Muslims in abundance the appointing authority must be very communal-minded to have kept the proportion of Muslims and non-Muslims steady as it had been. As regards political considerations, why one of the chief recommendations for appointment had been not only the loyalty of the candidate, but also that of his father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and all sorts of relations and connections. Therefore, for a critic from amongst the civil servants to point out that since the Reforms political considerations were more in evidence than in the past, it could only mean that different sorts of political considerations had come into evidence as against the one class of political considerations that were so prominent in the past and were very severely criticised as outweighing all considerations of efficiency and real good of the State."

The most important item in the alleged communal policy of Fazl-i-Husain was the system under which elections were held in India. He stood unequivocally for separate electorates for Muslims and other minorities who claimed them. The minorities, he pointed out, wanted separate electorates, while the majority community insisted on joint electorates. The reason for the tug-of-war was that the minorities wished to retain their individuality, while the majority desired homogeneity with the absorption of all separate groups. He argued thus: "So the issue is: Is it in the interests of the country that the minorities be absorbed by the majority and homogeneity secured or is it in the interests of the country that the minorities be assured of their religious and cultural independent existence and thus to a certain extent be a bar to uniformity and homogeneity? The answer is that it is not in the interests of the country that minorities should be crushed

out of existence, because national unity and strength cannot be attained until the several communities pull their weight towards mutual development. History tells us that the crushing out of minorities has seldom succeeded and even if it could be done it would be inhuman and detrimental to national strength. What is more, as long as India is under the sway of a foreign power anxious to use minorities as a counterpoise against the majority, it is outside practical politics to think of crushing out the minorities. The only alternative, therefore, is to uplift the minorities, to afford them every protection and to ameliorate their conditions. The only effective way of helping the minorities is by giving them separate electorates which would keep them in being rather than allow them gradually to become weaker and weaker till they become politically non-existent. The experience of Municipal and District Board elections has unmistakably shown that voting invariably takes place on communal lines, and the obvious conclusion of this experience is that the Hindus, who incidentally are educationally and economically better off than Muslims and have a powerful Press to support them, will sweep the election booths....Joint electorates can only be fair to the minorities when people are sufficiently politically minded to rise above communal considerations. The controversy is bitter only in two provinces in India, i.e., the Punjab and Bengal, and the reason is, obvious. In these two provinces the population majority is a majority only in name and minority in every other sense, e.g. in the voting register, in public services, in local self-Government, educationally and economically. For example, in the Punjab, although the Muslims are 55% of the population, yet in voting strength they are only 42% of the total electorate which means that if the voting took place strictly on communal lines they are bound to be in a minority. In public services except in the lower sections (e.g. constables and watchmen) of Police and Jail Department the Muslims were in a minority. The same applied to local self-Government and education. On the other hand, separate electorates afford protection to Muslims and also prevent

communal discord. Amritsar, for example, has always had separate electorates yet up to 1922 it has shown communal unity of such strength that the whole of India has been proud of it. If anything, communal electorates by dividing spheres of interest prevent friction and rivalry which would otherwise embitter the relations of the two communities during elections. Moreover, it has been found by experience that separate electorates are no bar to joint action in the legislature and they constitute no obstacle in the way of the formation of non-communal parties in the legislature. C. R. Das formed Swaraj Party in Bengal, Unionist Party was formed in the Punjab and the Congress Party flourished in the Central Legislature. The controversy, however, has been perpetual and since no political advance by India, under the domination of a foreign power, is possible unless the advance is more or less a joint demand of important sections of the Indian population, it is necessary that the controversy should be brought to a close. The remedy lies in lowering the franchise, improving the economic and educational condition of the minority community and reaching a stage to have its population reflected in the voting register. As soon as that stage is reached it would not be difficult to make joint electorates the rule in all elections. In the meantime it seems to be unsound to make joint electorates the *sine qua non* of co-operation among communities for the achievement of their common political ends. The policy of accepting separate electorates, not by conviction but by compromise, has everything to commend itself for adoption in the India of today."[1]

The Mahasabha opposition, however, would not be calmed by an appeal to reason, and agitated in season and out of season. The agitation culminated in 1923 in a censure motion against Fazl-i-Husain moved by Raja Narendra Nath. This was the only censure motion moved against him during his entire career as minister in the Provincial Council, and it failed. The proposed censure alleged:—

[1] A note written by Fazl-i-Husain.

(a) That the Panchayat Act, 1921, does not safeguard the interests of minorities such as Sikhs, Hindus and Christians.

(b) That communal representation has been extended to affect existing incumbents of offices and adversely affected them, e.g. Dr. Shiv Lal has been replaced by Dr. Muhammad Bashir.

(c) That communal representation has been introduced in admission to Government and Medical Colleges.

(d) That the communal principle has been extended to municipalities.

In a speech which lasted for several hours Raja Narendra Nath made virulent attacks on Fazl-i-Husain and ended by calling him Aurangzeb and asked him to follow the example of Akbar. Fazl-i-Husain, cool, calm and collected, replied: "I am grateful to the mover of this adjournment for affording me an opportunity not only of removing his suspicions, but also of combating the indefinite, vague and acrimonious propaganda conducted by a certain section of the Punjab Press against me and against what is called my communal policy." While analysing the charges against himself, he said: "Now, Sir, the term or expression communal policy or communal representation is more or less vague. In its bad sense, communal policy or communal representation in services means favouritism, and nepotism guided by religious fanaticism. If, Sir, that is the definition in the mind of the Honourable mover that in the administration of any department this sort of policy has been adopted, then, Sir, I repudiate that suggestion as absolutely untrue and unfounded. If, on the other hand, communal representation or communal policy means that when you are judging as to the merits of a man, as to his academic distinctions, as to his experience, as to his family and as to the services he has rendered to the benign Government, you also take into consideration his community; if that is the definition of communal representation, then, Sir, the next question is, is it right to give me the distinction of being the author of this policy? Whether, Sir, I approve of the policy or not, whether I have

followed it or not, one thing I can say for certain and that is this that I am not the author of this policy. As a matter of fact, this policy has been in existence in India throughout, and in the Punjab as well. Therefore, Sir, to say that I am the author of this communal policy which has brought about the disunion of Hindus and Muhammadans is, I consider, an aspersion upon me personally for which my critics have no justification whatsoever. If there is any one man who can claim to have brought about Hindu-Muslim unity, I claim, Sir, that I am that man." He referred to his presidential address to the Political Conference of 1917 and analysed the root causes of communal dissensions and the means of effecting unity in the national interest. He drew attention to the Lucknow Pact and said that his advice to his Punjab brethren was: Do not quibble, do not be petty, do not appeal to each other's charity. Come to a business-like understanding between yourselves and abide by it and then your differences will not come in the way of your political advancement. In support of communal representation he pointed out the mutual decision of the two communities and said: "Religion in Asia, and I believe throughout the world, is an integral part of the individuality of a person and it is impossible to entirely ignore it. Therefore to say 'take no account of it' is easier said than done... This, however, does not mean that because of the religion of one man, you should do injustice to the administration of the country by lowering the efficiency for the sake of the religion of a man. I think that that would be nothing short of treachery to the office one holds. Therefore, Sir, I claim that in matters of administration if you are really lowering the efficiency of a department by taking in men of different creeds, I stand against it."

While dealing with specific charges he pointed out the contradiction in asking for communal electorates to be introduced in panchayats while the same were objected to in every other sphere. He was thus being criticized for enforcing the principle of communal representation as well as for not enforcing it. As regards the principle of communal representation in services, he said, that though a

minister in Madras had extended it to existing officers he had not done so in the Punjab. The facts about Dr. Shiv Lal were that he was one of the Assistant Surgeons who were temporarily engaged during the war and when the permanent incumbent Kanhaya Lal returned, Dr. Shiv Lal had to make room for him. It was, therefore, manifestly wrong to say that he was replaced by a Muslim. Dr. Muhammad Bashir was six places senior to Dr. Shiv Lal and was given another place in the Medical Department. Referring to the allegation made by Ganga Ram in the same connection, he said: "Then I am told that I re-employed one Sher Muhammad (after his retirement) because he was a Muslim. It is a base insinuation to say that I re-employed him because he was a Muslim, and that I would not have done so if he had been a Hindu. Well, Sir, if I am wrong in re-employing him, then I say it is this gentleman (pointing to the Honourable Lala Harkishan Lal) in whose Department the man has really been re-employed who is responsible for it. At heart my Honourable colleague is probably a Muslim and is only masquerading as a Hindu, because the other minister must be a Hindu; exonerate me, Sir, from all blame for the doings of this gentleman!"[1]

With regard to the general principle of communal representation in the services, it was old and well-established. In 1901, the Punjab Government had decided that not less than 30% of subordinate appointments should be filled by Muslims. No ultimate percentages to be reached were fixed, nor was any period prescribed within which the provisional ones were to be reached, with the result that in practice the decisions of Government had remained a dead letter. All that Fazl-i-Husain did, therefore, was to carry out the previous policy of Government in a practical and moderate manner. The quota fixed for Muslims was 40%, with 20% for Sikhs and 40% for Hindus, and this was applied to most branches of the administration. In 1925 Fazl-i-Husain instituted the compilation of an annual census of Government servants, showing both community and

[1] Punjab Council Proceedings, March 13, 1923.

status as Zamindar or non-Zamindar, and made this census available to members of the Legislative Council. This was to focus the attention of the public on the exact state of affairs, so as to quieten imaginary grievances and at the same time show the extent to which Muslims deserved preferential treatment. It was thus made clear that, although the position of the Muslims improved considerably from what it had been before, the persistent assertion of the Hindu Press that Hindu and Sikh interests were being ruthlessly sacrificed was manifestly wrong. Statistics showed that Muslims were in no case unduly favoured, and nowhere were they more than 50% of the personnel of a service; generally, they were very much less.

With regard to the charge that communal representation had been introduced in Government and Medical Colleges the position was that these two colleges afforded opportunities not available anywhere else, and it was an accepted principle that educationally Muslims should be helped to bring them into line with the Hindus. As long as the number seeking admission was not large the question of selection did not arise and no question of facilitating the admission of Muslim students arose, but when selection was done according to examination marks Muslims were left out. The number of Muslim students who appeared for or passed the Matriculation Examination which formed the gateway to the Government and the Medical Colleges was comparatively small and therefore, the number of those who obtained high marks was also proportionately small. Also, Muslims, who obtained high marks in the examination were very often unable to bear the cost of education in an expensive college. The Hindu students belonged to economically better off classes and a comparatively large number of them combined adequate financial means with high examination marks. Muslim students who were financially in a position to seek admission to the colleges belonged mainly to the category of average students as far as their examination results went; but who could say that some of them would not actually make better use than

anybody else of the opportunities they sought? The marks which a student obtained in his Matriculation Examination are after all a very rough and rather unreliable test of how he will shape in the college or during his subsequent career. In the case of the Medical College who could say that a student who had perhaps not been able to show good results in general subjects like English and Mathematics and had, therefore, not obtained a high total of marks, did not have special aptitude for the medical profession and would not actually make a more successful physician or surgeon than perhaps some of the students with a high total of marks? Up to 1916 all students who offered themselves for admission were admitted to the Medical College, but in 1917 there was not enough room and Muslims and Sikhs came to be excluded. In 1918, a Congress deputation urged for greater representation of Muslims. In 1919, the Governor answered that percentages would be fixed and all that Fazl-i-Husain did was to carry out that policy. 40% for Hindus, 20% for Sikhs and 40% for Muslims were fixed but it was provided that their qualifications should not fall below Second Division. Admissiòn to special educational institutions was communally regulated in other provinces where the ministers concerned—some of them Hindus—were never described on that account as enemies of Hindus or as separators of communities.

The admission of Muslims to the Government College was inadequate and the matter was agitated in 1914. Twenty Muslim public bodies jointly represented that rules for admission to the Government College should be altered, and the Governor promised a sympathetic consideration of the claims made. Muslims asked for reservation of seats in the same way as Indians asked for them at Oxford and Cambridge. In Government College besides academic qualifications, the fact whether the student had a relation in the College at the time or in the past, whether his father was or had been in Government service and whether he had rendered any service to Govarnment were considered. Muslim being educationally backward, and their representation in services being poor, they continued to be ex-

cluded from Government College. It was, therefore, justifiable to introduce the communal principle in admission to the college, provision being made for minimum academic qualifications for all students.

As regards communal representation in municipal bodies, Fazl-i-Husain pointed out that under the existing system of distribution Hindus had greater representation than their population and voting strength warranted. In order, therefore, to afford protection to Muslims against unfair Hindu ascendancy, it became necessary to devise a formula under which the elected seats on municipal committees were not unevenly distributed among the communities. Community percentages were taken by population and by voting strength, and elected seats on municipal committees were distributed among the communities in proportion to the arithmetic mean of the two percentages, i.e., if Hindus constituted 20% of the population and 40% of the voting strength, then they would be entitled to 30% representation. The important point was that this formula was only applicable to places where communal representation was already in existence. Further, there was not a single instance of a local body where the Hindu element was reduced, except that in the reorganisation of some local bodies the number of members was increased and the inadequacy of Muslim representation was remedied, not by turning out Hindus, but by adding new Muslims. Fazl-i-Husain had, on the other hand, been firm in resisting considerable pressure for extension of the system of communal electorates to places where it was not already in force. Figures disproved the allegation that the communal principle was being forced on local bodies to the detriment of the Hindus. As regards other local bodies, namely, panchayats and Small Town Committees, which were entirely the creation of Fazl-i-Husain, communal representation was *not* introduced.

Finally, in replying to the motion of censure against him, Fazl-i-Husain pointed out that he regarded communal representation as a temporary expedient based on the principle of helping backward communities irrespective of

their religion, in order to build a united and a strong nation. In his peroration he said: "I look forward to an India where there are no distinctions of Hindus or Muslims, of Christians and Jews, where there are no distinctions of untouchables, where the religion is the religion of humanity and the creed is the creed of human brotherhood. (hear, hear). It is a creed, Sir, which I want all members of this House, be they Hindus or Christians, to try to learn for the good of humanity and for the good relationship between themselves. Not only that. I look forward to a day when there will be not only the obliteration of these religious distinctions, but also the obliteration of all racial distinctions. We are keen on the Indianisation of services. I look forward to a day when men will be employed because they are worthy of the posts, be they Europeans or Indians. I look forward to a day when narrow nationlism will give way to internationalism. (Loud cheers)."[1] The censure motion was defeated, Fazl-i-Husain was fully vindicated, and the misrepresentations of the Mahasabha were exposed. His colleague, Harkishan Lal, though he strongly differed from Fazl-i-Husain about separate electorates, had disapproved of the motion. Having failed to dislodge Fazl-i-Husain from the ministry, the Mahasabha attempted arbitration through the Congress. Mahatma Gandhi undertook to arbitrate and met Fazl-i-Husain at Cecil Hotel, Simla, in the presence of Lajpat Rai and Bhai Permanand. To the great dismay of both these Mahasabhites, Mahatma Gandhi concluded the meeting by expressing full confidence in Fazl-i-Husain, and said that he himself would have pursued the same policy under those circumstances.

[1] Punjab Council Proceedings, March 13, 1923.

## CHAPTER XI

## *NEW DELHI: 1930-1935*

ON April 1, 1930, Fazl-i-Husain reached Delhi and took over charge as Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council for the Department of Education, Health and Lands. He took up his residence at 6, King Edward Road, New Delhi, and remained there throughout his term of office except for the summer seasons at Simla, where he stayed at the *Retreat*. Soon after his arrival he chalked out a programme of work which he assiduously followed for the next five years. It meant about ten hours hard work every day, and this routine varied very little, because his health did not permit him to be very sociable, and to go to dinners and parties which he did not regard as essential social obligations. The only functions he attended regularly were the fortnightly dinners of the Executive Councillors held in the house of each Member in rotation.

What, however, broke up his daily routine was ill-health, but in time even this did not substantially affect the amount of attention and labour he devoted to work. His chronic complaint (bronchitis), made it difficult for him to lead a normal active life, so very often he worked in bed instead of in his office. After June 1931, low temperature was almost a constant feature, and it weakened and exhausted him. He could not even talk to people for long without feeling tired, and had to conserve his energy by seeing only a few every day. But there was hardly anyone who did not receive a patient hearing; he regarded it as his duty to listen to what his visitors had to say and to do what in his judgment was possible or desirable. As his method in politics was to talk to, persuade and convince

his followers and his opponents, this was a severe handicap, and every effort cost him acute physical strain. When in 1932 his health broke down completely, he took four months' leave and went to Abbottabad to recuperate, but it did not improve his health. Thereafter, most of his days were spent sitting or reclining on his bed, reading the files, dictating letters or notes, and receiving visitors. This continued till he left Delhi in 1935.

During these five years, the stress and strain of political turmoil, grinding labour, constant ill-health and domestic worries undermined his constitution completely, and during the last two years of his stay at Delhi it was more an effort of will than physical energy or strength which enabled him to perform his duties. His failing health made him acutely conscious of the fact that his end was near, and it pained him to think that a multitude of his responsibilities, both official and private, were not yet discharged. Litigation with his step-brothers, for example, with regard to ancestral property was expensive and caused endless worry. Eventually he won the case, but his magnanimity towards his step brothers in the subsequent settlement cost him over Rs. 25,000. The residential house at 7, Lytton Road, Lahore, was also the subject of litigation with Bhawalpur State. He won this case too in the High Court, but that was not till 1936 after several years of efforts. The heavy fall in agricultural prices reduced his income from landed property to almost nothing, and some of the tenants absconded with arrears of rent amounting to nearly Rs. 20,000. He had to draw upon his savings accummulated as a practising lawyer, and when in 1933 his wife wanted to build a new house in Lahore he was obliged to borrow money from his bank. Two sons and two daughters had to be settled in life. The marriage of his eldest daughter was a complete failure and a constant source of anxiety to him. In 1931, his second son, Naim Husain, to whom he was particularly attached, suddenly, while at Cambridge, developed pneumonia, and died after a brief illness of four days. This was a great blow to his failing health, and in order

to forget his loss he immersed himself in harder work than ever before.

In spite of all these difficulties and reverses of fortune his steadfastness and his devotion to duty, both to his country and to his community, never wavered, and he continued to toil faithfully. To uphold his view point in the Council was often not an easy task. To begin with, there was a strong prejudice against his alleged communal bias, and his brief telegraphic notes which he was in the habit of writing did not help him to be understood, but instead sometimes irritated his colleagues. The tenacity with which he believed in certain things forced him frequently to disagree[1] with his colleagues in the Executive Council and as very often his was the only dissenting voice, he had to tax his energies greatly to meet the objections of his colleagues. As time passed, however, they showed considerable deference to his views, and he was able in some directions to influence the policy of the Government of India. His insistence on strict constitutional practice and Indianization in his own department helped other departments to follow his example and thereby he raised the standard of the entire Central administration. The position of Fazl-i-Husain was strengthened by the fact that he wielded considerable influence over the Muslim members of the Assembly and could, when need arose, turn the balance in favour of Government. In the Assembly forty-four members belonged to the Congress Party, eleven to the Congress Nationalist Party, eleven to the European group, twenty-two to the Independent Party (of whom eighteen were Muslims), while thirty-nine were nominated officials and non-officials. The Government could normally rely on about fifty votes, and as the combined Congress and Congress Nationalist votes came to fifty-five, the result of most divisions depended upon the attitude of the Independent Party.

[1] "There was a meeting of the Executive Council in the evening and I met all my colleagues. During the discussion I had to differ from my colleagues and it appeared that H.E. resented it, for he said: This is the very first meeting after your return (from South Africa) and we cannot agree." (Diary—February 29, 1932.)

One of the first problems which Fazl-i-Husain dealt with as an Executive Councillor was that of unrest and disturbances in the N.W.F.P. The local administration was more unpopular than it had ever been before, and discontent, as compared with the neighbouring provinces, was very great. The reason was that although conditions in the province were not materially different from those obtaining in the frontier districts of the Punjab, laws of undue severity were enforced, and the standard of administration was considerably lower than in the Punjab. Rumours of socialist and democratic movements from across the border filtered into the Peshawar bazaars. The Morley-Minto Reforms were not extended to the Frontier Province, just as later Montague-Chelmsford Reforms did not apply to it. The activities of Beneficent Departments did not attain the standard prevailing in the frontier districts of the neighbouring province. Educationally the province was very backward. Local Government institutions were almost wholly devoid of popular representation and control. A number of educated men, especially those who had been abroad, felt keenly their implied inferiority not only as compared with Europeans but also in comparison with other Indians. It was inevitable, therefore, that the people should be discontented, and finally disgusted.

The result was that an agitation for reforms developed slowly but surely. When the hopes for reform in municipal administration were dashed to pieces by the introduction of partial elections in the Peshawar Municipality, men like Syed Lal Badshah and Ali Gul Khan turned toward the Congress in despair. Several of them, including Abdul Ghaffar Khan, went to attend the 1929 Session of the All-India Congress at Lahore, and came back with the conviction that nothing short of the Congress War of Independence could give them an equal status with the rest of India. In September 1929, Syed Qaim Shah started the Afghan Jirga movement at Utmanzai. It aimed primarily at the economic rehabilitation of the peasantry by removal of their habit of extravagant and ruinous litigation, by putting an end to their old standing enmities and

blood-feuds, and by eradicating vicious social customs and abuses prevalent in Pathan society. In order to achieve all this, Jirgas of respectable men of good morals were formed in the villages. A movement called *Khudai Khidmatgar* was started under the direction of the Jirgas in each village. Those first enrolled dyed their shirts and trousers red, which gave them the name of Red Shirts. The people responded to the appeal of the Central Committee of the Jirgas, and the movement rapidly gained in strength. It was unconnected with the Congress and was not an outcome of the misdirected energies of hotheaded revolutionaries as alleged by the local authorities of the province, but represented responsible men of moderate views in no way committed to the Civil Disobedience movement.

As a part of the temperance campaign on April 23, 1930, some prominent public leaders of Peshawar wanted to picket liquor shops, but nine of them were arrested before they could do so. Later, two more were arrested while addressing a public meeting; and when a crowd followed them to the police station, armoured cars drove into the crowd and fired upon them, causing heavy casualties. At Charsadda, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and some other co-workers were arrested and sentenced to three years' rigorous imprisonment. *Pukhton*, Abdul Ghaffar Khan's journal for propagating social reform, was declared illegal and its publication stopped. These arrests excited the people, who assembled in large numbers, some forty to fifty thousand, and made a demonstration, but were peacefully dispersed by *Khudai Khidmatgars*. The incarceration of Mian Ahmad Shah, who had seldom made any reference to Government in his speeches, gave a rude shock to the Pathan intelligentsia. The heavy sentences passed on Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his co-workers led the rural public to believe that any reconstruction of Pathan society was resented by Government. Popular sentiment was aroused, and educated young men took up the work of the leaders. As the repressive policy of Government became more irksome, the enrolment of *Khudai Khidmatgars* increased. On April 24, the military was withdrawn from the city

and calm was restored, but on May 4, the city was reoccupied by the military, arrests were made, volunteers beaten with *lathies* and rifle butts, and their uniforms torn. A British soldier fired at a tonga, killing a woman and two children; and when their dead bodies were carried in procession the military fired and killed nine and wounded eighteen persons. Cases of stabbing with bayonets by British soldiers were also reported.

The severity of repression put a stop to all demonstrations by the people; nevertheless, the Frontier Government asked the Government of India to enforce Martial Law but Fazl-i-Husain strongly protested against this.[1] The reports received from Peshawar, he said, were incomplete and mystified rather than enlightened; and no action was called for before detailed enquiries had been made.[2] He warned his colleagues that if they entered upon a further course of repression it might have unforeseen and important consequences.[3] "The lull," he added, "should not be taken to mean peace, much less contentment because the reaction to harshness and oppression in the Frontier Province is bound to be nasty and deplorable. Force cannot hold the people in subjection for any length of time."[4] As a result of this protest it was decided for the time being not to enforce Martial Law, and to hold an enquiry into the disturbances. On the recommendation of Fazl-i-Husain, Justice Shah Muhammad Suleman, reputed a capable and an independent Judge, was appointed as a member of the Peshawar Disturbances Committee.[5] Fazl-i-Husain was anxious that the responsibility of the Local Government should be fully assessed and the real causes of the disturbances made public. He asked for the appointment of a Defence Committee which should possess the confidence of the people and should have at its disposal legal advice and funds to enable it to put the case of the people before the Enquiry Committee. This, he said, practically came to taking pains

[1] Diary—April 29, 1930.
[2] Diary—April 26, 1930.
[3] Diary—May 3, 1930.
[4] Diary—May 27, 1930.
[5] Diary—May 14, 1930.

to have the case against Government prepared, but as Government had never taken the position that an official can do no wrong, every effort should be made to ascertain facts. Government was reluctant but agreed when the Congress organized its own supplementary Congress Committee. At the Home Department refusing permission to Pt. Malviya to enter the N.W.F.P. and organize relief, Fazl-i-Husain urged that this could not be justified unless Government was prepared to organize a Relief Committee itself. A Relief Committee was accordingly organized under the orders of the Government of India, and its funds were utilized to liquidate the claims of the dependents of those dead and seriously injured.

Later, when Martial Law was introduced against Fazl-i-Husain's advice, he urged that it should be withdrawn as soon as possible. He pointed out that there had been tribal raids and wars in the past, but it was never considered necessary to introduce Martial Law. The reports from Peshawar did not show that any emergency existed which could not be met by other means. Martial Law was introduced as an extension of the repressive policy of military rule, and to cover up the failure of the military outposts in the tribal area and of the military in Peshawar district to deal with Afridi raiders. The Frontier Crimes Regulations were sufficient to meet the situation, specially when visitors from outside were prevented from coming into the province, news was censored, and movements of the people between villages were controlled. At first Government did not agree, and later only agreed on condition that a Public Safety Regulation be passed as a substitute. Fazl-i-Husain was opposed to this as the proposed Regulations were in the nature of permanent enhanced powers to be vested in the executive, a 'lawless law' without the justification of any exceptional circumstances.[1] His voice was a voice in the wilderness, but he continued to fight and had some of the more objectionable features of the Regulations removed.

[1] Diary—December 17, 1930.

When Government resorted to bombing along the Frontier, Fazl-i-Husain asked why advance notice was not given to peaceful citizens, especially as such notices had been given even to enemies during regular warfare. In 1933 he again insisted that bombing should not be resorted to, but when the decision was taken he recorded a note of dissent. Government took strong action in Peshawar, he said, when there was Afridi trouble across the border, and later again took strong action in Peshawar because it was alleged by the Chief Commissioner that failure to maintain order in Peshawar would engender lawlessness among the Afridis.

In 1933 Fazl-i-Husain pressed for the speedy release of political prisoners, particularly of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Dr. Khan Sahib. When the ban against Congress organizations was withdrawn all over India, the notifications in the N.W.F.P. against the Afghan Jirga (Frontier Province Congress Committee), the Red Shirts, and the Provincial Naujawan Bharat Sabha were not withdrawn, on the ground of their being "revolutionary organization". Fazl-i-Husain opposed this discrimination and said that they were no more "revolutionary" than the All-India Congress movement, and their uniforms were not much different from those worn by Akali *Jathas* in the Punjab in 1920-25, but Government insisted on discrimination. The bureacracy justified its policy by saying that the Red shirts were engaged in inciting the trans-border tribes against the British to raise a serious conflagration and to establish an Islamic Kingdom with Afghanistan as its nucleus.[1] Some officials even argued that the *Khudai Khidmatgars* were connected with the Bolshevists. As against these views Fazl-i-Husain contended that Pan-Islamism and the Khilafat movement were dead, and that allegations about attempts to establish an Islamic Kingdom were groundless. Also, some of the front rank leaders of the Red Shirts were big landlords, and it had in no way been established that the tribesmen had received money from the Russian Legation in Kabul. The truth of the matter was that the Chief

[1] J. Coatman: *Years of Destiny*, 1932, p. 367.

Commissioner lacked the capacity to deal with the wide questions of reform, and he and his administration persistently obstructed them in every way with the result that the Red Shirts were being driven towards the Congress camp.[1]

Fazl-i-Husain wrote in his diary: "Will Government retain Muslim support or alienate it by repression in the Frontier Province? Probabilities are that it will be alienated. Thus a strong party will form itself of Congressite Muslims in the Frontier Province and this will encourage the development of Ahrar in the Punjab."[2] Soon the Afghan Jirga and the *Khudai Khidmatgars* were irretrievably alienated, and Abdul Ghaffar Khan decided that the only way to right the Frontier's wrongs was to associate himself with the Congress. In August 1930, Abdul Ghaffar Khan and others met the Congress Working Committee and it was agreed that the Provincial Congress Committee and the Afghan Jirga should coalesce, and a new provincial organisation formed in accordance with the Congress constitution should represent the Congress in the province and be known as the Frontier Province Jirga.[3]

While political warfare continued, Fazl-i-Husain drew up a programme for the future administration of the Frontier Province. He convinced Government that the province had been unfairly treated in matters of constitutional advance, and proposed that the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms should at once be extended to the Frontier Province, and the case for a second instalment of reforms on an equal footing with other provinces taken up in due course. As far back as 1922, in the Punjab Council, he had advocated that the N.W.F.P. should be given Reforms.[4] Government had disregarded the agitation for reforms, and the recommendations of the Bray Committee were never implemented; the people waited in vain for eight years. Fazl-i-Husain now placed before the Government a scheme of reformed Government similar to that in

[1] Diary—November 19, 1931.
[2] Diary—January 1, 1932.
[3] Congress Bulletin, No. 4, dated August 21, 1930.
[4] Punjab Council Proceedings—August 2, 1922.

the Punjab. In 1932, after much hesitation, Government raised the status of the Frontier Province to that of a Governor's Province, and provincial Council elections were held in 1933. In the following year the Frontier Province was given a seat in the Central Assembly and Dr. Khan Sahib was elected to represent the province. This placed the Frontier Province on terms of equality with other Provinces in India.

## CHAPTER XII

# *INDIANS IN AFRICA*

AFTER the N.W.F.P., South Africa and its Indian problem made the strongest claim on Fazl-i-Husain's attention during his years at Delhi. Though Indians in various parts of Africa form an important section of the population, they have been discriminated against in a most humiliating manner. Africans were not used to employment for wages, therefore, Europeans utilized indentured Indian labour in coal mines, in laying railroads, and in the development of the sugar, tea and wattle industries.[1] Yet the labourers were called 'coolies,' with the connotation of what a pariah or untouchable is in India. Residential Indian areas were called 'ghettoes,' which municipalities were free to neglect. In Kenya there was no common franchise, and the communal franchise prevented Europeans from having to go to Indians for votes. When the Indians in protest refrained from joining the legislative, executive and municipal councils, the Kenya Government retaliated by nominating Europeans instead of Indians. Indians paid education taxes yet their schools were not given adequate grants. In the services, no Indian was appointed in the officers' grade, and even among the subordinate staff the Kenya Government replaced Indians with Portuguese and other Europeans. The Uganda Government restricted the employment of Asiatics (which in practice meant Indians) to a salary of not more than 200 shillings, and even then not on the permanent list. While there were 11,000 Indians and only 1,900 Europeans, the Legislative Council had two Europeans and only one

[1] Lord Hailey: *An African Survey*, 1938, p. 320.

Indian. Similarly, in Tanganyika (a mandate where racial discrimination was theoretically not permitted) and in Transvaal Indians had no municipal or parliamentary franchise.

In short, the policy of General Smuts was to write "No Thoroughfare" across the road to South Africa, and Indian immigration was prohibited in 1913. The policy was to keep Indians in Africa in check socially, politically and economically, so that they might never become rivals to the small European community. In 1924 a Class Areas' Reservation and Immigration Restriction Bill was introduced to set aside bazaars for Asiatics in towns and to segregate them in certain areas. When the Indians received this proposal with hostility further stages of the Bill were postponed, and a conference was held at Cape Town, and the Cape Town Agreement of 1927 was signed. It reaffirmed the right of South Africa to use all just and legitimate means for the maintenance of western standards of life, but recognised that Indians domiciled in the Union who were prepared to conform to western standards of life should be enabled to do so, and that the Union should advance their social and educational interests. The Union Government agreed to organise a scheme of assisted, though voluntary, emigration to India or other countries where western standards were not required, Union domicile being lost after a period of three years' continuous absence. The Union Government also agreed not to proceed further with the Class Areas' Reservation and Immigration Bill, and in order to secure continuous and effective co-operation between the two Governments, an Agent was appointed to South Africa by the Government of India. Finally, the Union Government recognized that it is the duty of every civilized Government to devise ways and means for the uplifting of every section of the permanent population, and agreed to institute an enquiry into the education of Indians and housing conditions in the densely populated Indian areas.

The Agreement worked unsatisfactorily, because while the Government of India implemented the provisions with

which they were concerned, the Union Government did not hesitate to adopt discriminatory measures whenever it wanted to. The most important of all such measures was the Transvaal Asiatic Tenure (Amendment) Bill. The Bill proposed to segregate Indians in locations for purposes of occupation or ownership and to compel Indians to transfer within five years such interests as had grown up in contravention of the provisions of the existing law. It also laid down that Indians were prohibited from owning fixed property. Finally, local bodies could refuse certificates of fitness for trade to an Indian, on the ground that the applicant might not lawfully trade in that area.

Fazl-i-Husain, found the news of this proposed legislation most disquieting. In reply to an address presented by the representatives of the Imperial Citiznship Association, he said:

> "The resolutions passed by the South African Indian Congress at an emergency conference, held in the beginning of October, show the extent of the mental agitation from which the Indian community is at present suffering, and which it is easy to understand when the interests affected are so large and vital. You have referred to the pride felt by the Indian community in Transvaal in their racial origin and in the civilization of their ancestors which is several centuries old. This feeling is only natural, and I assure you that I yield to no one in anxiety that no harm will come to India's national self-respect or racial pride."[1]

Writing to Bajpai, his Secretary, who was at that time in England, he observed: "The position in South Africa seems to be far from satisfactory. It appears that the Union Government ministers are going out of their way to embark upon racial warfare. I am told that Mr. O. Pirow, Minister of Justice, and Mr. Grobbler, Minister of Lands, have recently made speeches raising the question that His Majesty's Government's policy relating to Kenya is wrong and that they must fight it out to the bitter end. Whether they are prepared to make a distinction between

[1] *The Indian Annual Register,* 1930, Volume II, p. 460.

Indians and the natives, I do not know; but if they are not, then obviously the principles they enunciate are such that India cannot but contest and, when it comes to a struggle, must do with all the power at its command. In fact, it seems to me that these people are raising a question of the utmost importance to the British Empire, viz. whether the British Empire is to be white or not. I do hope you will point out to the South African representatives in England the very great danger of such a struggle."[1]

Indians in South Africa saw the writing on the wall and begged C. F. Andrews to hurry to South Africa and help them to prevent the iniquitous Bill from being made into law. C. F. Andrews went, pleaded with Dr. Malan, and persuaded him to postpone the passing of the Bill till after a conference proposed to be held under the 1927 Agreement. Fazl-i-Husain was anxious to secure honourable terms for Indians and decided to lead the Indian delegation to South Africa himself.[2] He selected members who understood the problem of Indians in Africa, and at the same time enjoyed the confidence of the people, including the All-India Congress. After considerable persuasion, he secured Mahatma Gandhi's approval for the inclusion of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu as a member of the Delegation, and had long discussions with Mahatma Gandhi as to the best means of dealing with the problem.

Before leaving for South Africa in December 1931, he recorded in his diary:—

"I told the Executive Council and H.E. that the position of the Indian Delegation in the Conference was a most unpleasant one—suppliants begging for alms and not negotiators. We had no sanction behind us and the Union Government had the whip hand. I asked for authority to break off in case we were found to agree

[1] Letter dated October 13, 1930.

[2] He undertook this at some personal cost as may be gathered from an entry in his diary: "South African Delegation means to me 1,100 x $2\frac{1}{2}$ = 2,750; Nasim's expense 1,500; in all Rs. 4,250. However, I consider it as a part of my duty and though there is loss of money and loss of reputation, still I must do it as an unpleasant and unprofitable duty." (Diary—December 3, 1931.) Actually on account of his illness and other unanticipated expenses, Fazl-i-Husain incurred a loss of over Rs. 10,000.

to intolerable things. After all, our intercessions did but little good and what they appeared to put off for the time being they could bring up again within the next few years. H.E. was strongly of my view and others were a bit hostile, but eventually were prepared to leave a great deal of discretion in my hands."[1]

On his arrival at Johannesburg, Fazl-i-Husain found the Indians woefully divided among themselves. The South African Indian Congress was undoubtedly the most important organisation, but there were two other rival organisations — both exhibiting considerable jealousy and mutual ill-feeling. While the Congress was opposed by the Chamber of Commerce and the Indian Federation, certain Muslims were trying to create an organisation of their own. Fazl-i-Husain found that there was no real difference of opinion among them and the opposition to the Congress was only due to the inability of the Congress to find suitable offices for all the would-be leaders. He felt that if they did not unite the Indian cause would suffer and his delegation would not have an adequate backing from local Indian public opinion. He held consultations with them individually and collectively, and did not leave Johannesburg till he was convinced that they would all unite before the conference was held at Cape Town.[2]

On his arrival at Cape Town, his chronic ailment got the better of him, and he fell seriously ill and had to be admitted to a Nursing Home.[3] He deteriorated rapidly, and narrowly escaped with his life.[4] This incapacitated him for nearly two and a half weeks. The Conference opened on the 12th January and the proceedings had to be conducted without him. The Union Government was hostile to the Indian Delegation, and the proceedings began most unfavourably. Fazl-i-Husain was perturbed, and as soon as his temperature returned to normal, without waiting to recover his health, he proceeded to have talks with the

[1] Diary—November 29, 1931.
[2] Diary—January 6, 1932.
[3] Diary—January 9, 1932.
[4] Diary—January 12, 1932.

members of his delegation and the members[1] of the joint committee of all the Indian organizations in South Africa.

While the Indians wanted disabling laws to be repealed, the Union Government refused to do so and, in the alternative, Indians knowing that the disabling laws were not rigidly enforced, wanted the *status quo* to be maintained. The Union Government would not accept either course and wanted to take active steps to oust Indians from South Africa. Owing to economic and climatic reasons as well as the fact that 80% of the Indians in the Union were South African born, the possibilities of assisted emigration to India under the Cape Town Agreement had been exhausted. But the Union Government was dissatisfied with the assisted emigration scheme which by 1932 had caused only 10,000 Indians to leave the Union, and wanted all possibilities of further emigration to be explored. On the other hand, Indian opinion both in India and in South Africa was strongly against further assisted emigration to India.

On January 21, the Conference reached a crisis because the local Indian leaders refused to agree to an enquiry being made into assisted emigration, and in retaliation the Union Government threatened to pass the Transvaal Asiatic Tenure (Amendment) Bill, to revive the class Areas' Reservation and Immigration Restriction Bill, and to make the lives of Indians in South Africa impossible. The Indian Delegation asked local Indian leaders to modify their attitude towards assisted emigration, but they refused, and it appeared that the Conference must be brought to a close. After careful consideration Fazl-i-Husain persuaded Dr. Malan to agree to put off the next meeting till the 25th, when he could attend the Conference himself. It was rumoured that General Hertzog paid him a visit in the Nursing Home and offered a few minor concessions for those areas in South Africa which were predominantly Muslim, but Fazl-i-Husain told the General not to think that just because he was a Muslim he would be willing to barter away the rights and self-respect of his country for a few paltry concessions for members of his community.

[1] Rustomjee, Christopher, Kajee, Pather.

He would rather return to India to announce the failure of his mission than face his countrymen with an agreement which deprived even a single Indian of his rights in South Africa or exposed him to further humiliation because of his Indian birth.[1] Before the meeting of the 25th he persuaded the Congress and other leaders to accept the view that in the final analysis the Government of India was helpless, and that it was best to get as much out of the Union Government as possible, and for the rest continue to agitate. Thereafter he devised a formula acceptable to Indian opinion and likely to be agreed to by the Union Government.

At the next meeting of the Conference the question of assisted emigration was settled by agreement to set up an enquiry committee to investigate the possibilities of emigration to Brazil, British Guiana and Tanganyika. In view of the fact that India was excluded from this enquiry, and the places proposed were not likely to allow Indian immigration, the agreement was a substantial gain for the Indians. The Union Government had indirectly recognised that the possibilities of assisted emigration to India were exhausted. Thus no Indian was obliged to return to India unless he chose to do so, and if officials exercised any pressure, the local Indian Congress was free to oppose it. If, on the other hand, the scheme of assisted emigration to other countries proved successful it would provide an outlet, especially to the younger generation of Indians in South Africa, to a country where they might have greater opportunities both for economic development and for political self-expression.[2] The association of a representative of the South African Indian Congress was a valuable recognition by the Government of the Congress and also a safeguard for soundness of the enquiry. At the same time the assisted emigration scheme proved a powerful lever in the hands of the Indian Delegation to extract further concessions from the Union Government with regard to important matters like the Transvaal Ordinance and the

[1] *National Call*, March 14, 1943.
[2] *The Times of India*. April 6, 1932.

Transvaal Bill. Dr. Malan relied on the autonomy of provincial legislatures and governments, but Fazl-i-Husain pointed out to him that Indians were not represented on local bodies or in local legislatures, so it was the duty of the federal ministers to protect them against their own party by persuasion and negotiations; if this could not be done, then legislatures would crush unrepresented communities out of existence. Dr. Malan, while admitting the cogency of Fazl-i-Husain's arguments, refused to commit the Union Government on the ground that such a commitment would amount to unwarranted interference in internal administration.

The Indian Delegation, presented a draft agreement excluding the Transvaal Bill and the Transvaal Ordinance. The Union Government rejected it and wanted two clauses laying down the Government policy regarding the uplift of Indians to be omitted. In the alternative, the Union Government proposed the extension of the 1927 Agreement for one year. Fazl-i-Husain regarded the uplift clause essential for any new agreement and its abandonment a retrograde measure for the future of Indians. He, therefore, refused the offer. A complete breach was imminent, he telegraphed to the Government of India and asked for authority, already granted in principle, to break off negotiations with the Union Government and to return to India. Before a reply from India came, as a last resort Fazl-i-Husain again approached Dr. Malan and suggested that as both Delegations had failed to arrive at an agreement, and as the suggestions made by the Indian Delegation had been exhausted, the Union Delegation should now put forward an alternative draft agreement. At the same time he impressed upon the Union Delegation that an agreement which was not likely to have Indian public opinion behind it would defeat the objects the Union Government had in view, namely, the investigation of an emigration scheme and of trade possibilities. Negotiations were resumed. After considerable wrangling the Union Government gave way; perseverance and persistence had won the day. The clause in favour of Indian uplift was saved; the Agent to

Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council: (Left to right) Bhore, Mitter, Crerar, Chetwood, Halifax, Rainy, Schuster and Fazl-i-Husain (1931).

Delegates of the Capetown Conference (1932).

the Government of India was to continue to watch over the interests of Indians; and no period was prescribed for the life of the renewed agreement. In short, the Cape Town Agreement remained unmodified except as regards the scheme of assisted emigration to India and the proposed exploration of the possibilities of land settlement elsewhere, and as such it was welcome to Indians. Just as the agreement was concluded a telegram was received from the Viceroy asking Fazl-i-Husain not to break off negotiations, to stay for a fortnight more and to agree even to one year's extension of the old agreement, something being better than nothing.[1]

Then started the battle for an honourable settlement with regard to the Transvaal Asiatic Tenure (Amendment) Bill. While this was not to be a part of the new Agreement, Fazl-i-Husain stipulatd that the Agreement already made would not be ratified by the Government of India unless Indian representations regarding the Transvaal Bill received favourable consideration. Briefly, the problem was to protect existing rights from further menace, to provide for future expansion of trading facilities for coming generations of Indians, and to attain these objects without the humiliation of any 'ghetto' treatment. The Delegation urged that the vested interests which had grown up with the tacit acquiescence of Government officials should be recognised rather than obliterated.

After protracted negotiations it was agreed that the principle of segregation embodied in the earmarking of areas of Asiatics should be given up, and the power to validate existing illegal occupations and to permit exceptions to restrictions of the Gold Law should be vested in an impartial commission presided over by a judge. This was to prevent dislocation of Indian business, and to provide Indians with reasonable facilities to trade in mining areas. The ownership of property not only in excepted areas but also in Asiatic bazaars and locations set apart for Asiatics was allowed. Thus the right to own land, even though confined to specified areas, represented an entirely new

[1] Diary—February 4, 1932.

departure since such a right had never before been conceded.

Considering the weakness of India's constitutional position, these were substantial achievements. The Delegation achieved more than they expected in India or had decided to accept. Both in India and in South Africa was a degree of satisfaction regarding the continuance of the Cape Town Agreement. The agreement, on the other hand, was looked upon with suspicion and disfavour by a powerful section of white opinion in South Africa. The government of General Hertzog was denounced by this section as having shown undue weakness and compromised the freedom of action of the white citizens of South Africa.

To bid farewell to the Delegation the Cape Colony Congress held a mass meeting at Cape Town. Fazl-i-Husain in his farewell message said that the progress of Indians in South Africa lay in continued constitutional agitation by a powerful united organisation. "It may be a long road," he concluded, "but I assure you it is the right road and there can be no short-cut." He gave a personal demonstration of the unity he advocated. General Hertzog, leader of the Dutch Party, it is said, attempted to split Indians in South Africa into Hindu and Muslim groups. Mr. Aslam, an eminent Muslim, approached Fazl-i-Husain for receiving a Muslim deputation and holding a meeting of Muslims. Fazl-i-Husain regarded this as a wedge in the Indian ranks and told him that the Muslims should hold a joint meeting with the Congress unless it was for purposes entirely unconnected with the struggle that faced all Indians equally. He added: "I recognize no other representative organisation of Indians in South Africa than the South African Indian National Congress. We, as Hindus and Muslims, may have our differences in India but in South Africa we are all Indians and we should behave like Indians."[1] Mr. Aslam agreed and arranged a big meeting, but the adver-

[1] An entry in his Diary confirms this view:—

"Had a visit from Shams-ud-Din, a Punjabi, who has lived in East Africa for a long time. He confidentially raised the question of Muslims and non-Muslims in Kenya. I asked him not to raise it and not let anyone else raise it." (Diary—May 6, 1930.)

tised agenda included a separate educational scheme for Muslims. When Fazl-i-Husain saw this notice he refused to go in spite of the entreaties of the conveners and the big gathering which had assembled and was waiting for him to come.[1] The Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri, while describing the work of the Delegation, wrote: "Sir Fazl-i-Husain, in spite of serious illness, surpassed all expectation by his patience, tact and skill as well as by the firmness with which he repressed all communal tendencies among our countrymen there."[2]

Later, when an Agent to South Africa had to be appointed Fazl-i-Husain regarded merit as the most important element in the selection. As the first two Agents had been Hindus, the Viceroy suggested the appointment of a Muslim to which Fazl-i-Husain readily agreed. When, however, he found that no really suitable Muslim who was at once patriotic, able and a social asset was available at the time, he did not hesitate to recommend a non-Muslim. There were several Muslim friends who wanted to go but they did not fulfil the qualifications he had in mind. So he recommended Sir Maharaj Singh. When the Viceroy suggested some Muslim names and tried to put him in the wrong by asking him why he was going back on his decision to have a Muslim, he replied: "Maharaj Singh belongs to a good family, has personality, position, experience, knowledge and tact and his wife is held by all whom I have consulted to be eminently suitable for South Africa."[3] Eventually Sir Maharaj Singh was appointed.

The Delegation returned to Delhi on February 28, 1932, and the next day Fazl-i-Husain proceeded to the Viceroy's House with his Delelgation in order to be received by His Excellency. Recording this visit in his diary, he wrote: "We met His Excellency the Viceroy and had a talk. H.E. had not informed himself as to the nature of the agreement, legislation, etc., and in his talk with the delegates made some howlers which created a very bad impression on the delegates Sir Darcy Lindsay, Mrs. Naidu, Sir Kurma

[1] Diary—February 7, 1932.

[2] *The Servant of India*, April 7, 1932.

[3] Diary—May 1, 1932.

Reddi and Sastri while Bajpai and I felt much embarrassed, and it was a great relief when it was one o'clock and we went to lunch. Lady Willingdon was her usual charming self, and helped me to make the delegates forget the talk during our one hour's interview."[1]

Two years later the Carter Land Commission recommended that in the highlands, the only part of Kenya with good agricultural possibilities, exclusive rights of ownership be reserved for Europeans by law. Fazl-i-Husain protested strongly but His Majesty's Government announced the reservation of the highlands of Kenya. As a result Mr. Satyamurti proposed an adjournment motion in the Assembly in reply to which Fazl-i-Husain made his last speech as a Member of the Viceroy's Council outlining his views on the question of Indians overseas. "Five years ago," he said, "when I took up this appointment, I had set an ideal to myself. I said to myself that it shall be my business to act in a manner which would be in accord with Indian opinion. I made it my business to see that I was in contact with all the Indian leaders who took keen interest in the matter of Indians overseas. I was, I am in a position to say, most fortunate in that respect, as I had the privilege of being instructed as well as supported by the Leader of the Congress who is probably the best informed Indian on all questions concerning Indians in South Africa. I had his guidance as well as his support in the matter of the Indian Delegation which I had the privilege of taking to South Africa in 1931. . . I had also the privilege of being in direct touch with experts in the matter of Indians overseas like the Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri. I had the privilege of being in direct touch with the great Indian Peoples' Association in Bombay which has done a great deal of good work in this matter. I was equally fortunate with the Indian Press. . . Thus I was able in a few cases to achieve very minor successes. These successes really are very minor and dwindle into insignificance when one thinks of the numerous failures that one has come against. There is nothing to be proud of in the line of achievement. The ut-

[1] Diary—February 29, 1932.

most one could say is that I have not lost very much ground ....I have, Sir, to pay my tribute of gratitude to all the Indian leaders, including the leaders of the Congress, for the support they have given. But for their support, I do not think I would have had much heart even to put up such a hopeless struggle. We must remember that the struggle is more or less a hopeless struggle. We must not run away with the idea that we are united and there is no difficulty in the way of our achieving our desire. Nothing of the kind. We must not forget that India is a part of Asia. We must not forget that Asia is not Europe. Again, we must not forget that even Asiatics, who are not in our position do not have a look-in in places which are worth going to. So Indians must remember their twofold disability—firstly, they are Asiatics; secondly, they are situated as they are. Remembering these two disabilities, there is nothing that an Indian member of Government would not be prepared to do that anyone of you would like to do. Therefore, Sir, it is a matter of gratification to me to see, on the eve of my retirement, that on this point not only is there a tacit understanding that the policy of the Government of India is the Indian policy, but there has been, through the good offices of Mr. Satyamurti, an opportunity for a public declaration, on the floor of this House, to that effect. I trust that this significant fact will have some value. It may add a little more strength to the representation which will issue from the Government of India. Let us hope it will, but if it does not by any chance, the struggle cannot be given up. It has to be fought. It has to be continued. (Applause). It will never do to lose heart. Nobody, who believes in the future, can afford to lose heart. We believe that there is a future. If we begin to believe that there is no future, there would be no fun in my standing here or your sitting there. I trust that in a matter which is so dear to our hearts we should realise that unless we are in course of time able to create a certain amount of sympathy in the minds of Britishers in Britain and possibly a few in the Dominions and in the Colonies the difficult task of persuading people in authority to take even a fairly just view of

Indian claims is very remote indeed. When I mention the matter of the support that the Viceroy gives to our representations, I ought also to have mentioned that as much as we disagree with the Secretary of State in many matters, in matters relating to Indians overseas he has invariably assured us that he has done his very best with his colleague, the Colonial Secretary, in pressing our representations on him. However, we must be just to others, if we want other to be just to us. The Secretary of State for the Colonies is not so much responsible to us as he is to his own constituents, the British Parliament. If there was responsible government here, the member of the Government sitting here would think more of you sitting there than of people elsewhere.

*Mr. M. A. Jinnah*: That is what we want.

*The Hon'ble Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain*: Even when you do get it, the question of Indians overseas is not settled.

*Mr. S. Satyamurti*: We must go to war on that.

*The Hon'ble Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain*: You will require many Hitlers and many Mussolinis before you could even talk of war like that. So that is remote, I am afraid.

*An Hon'ble Member*: We have not got one yet.

*The Hon'ble Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain*: You had better try to develop some by and by. That seems to be your only chance. To come back to my point, I was saying what is really wanted is a certain amount of honourable propaganda enlisting the sympathies of people in Britain and elsewhere to take up the Indian case for a sympathetic hearing. Mr. Satyamurti shakes his head.

*Mr. S. Satyamurti*: Nothing doing.

*The Hon'ble Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain*: I am prepared to join issue with him. Britain is a very funny place.

*An Hon'ble Member*: Very.

*The Hon'ble Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain*: There may be people who are dead against you, but you will always find some people who are with you.

*Mr. S. Satyamurti*: Cranks.

*The Hon'ble Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain*: I assure you that a crank is not a man to be despised. Many great things can

be achieved through cranks. I have never despised cranks, and I have always solicited the co-operation even of cranks. From small beginnings you can achieve a successful organisation but that has got to be done. Anyhow, that is my humble view and I would be that last person to profess to dictate the soundness of that view to people who have much more experience, sitting opposite, than myself. However, that is a view which I have always entertained and I have thought it a great misfortune that one little Congress organization, that existed in London, for certain reasons had to be closed down. It may be found necessary to revive it."[1]

In response, Mr. Satyamurti referred to the new atmosphere which Fazl-i-Husain had brought with him to the Assembly and said that it was "some solace to our lacerated souls that there is at least one member of the Treasury Bench who can appreciate our point of view and, whether he agrees with us or not, can recognise that we are patriotic and are anxious to serve our country according to our lights, and it is a matter of regret to me that the first speech of his should also be his last speech in this House, but I hope, Sir, his example will not be lost on his colleagues and they will profit by a lesson which he has taught us." Mr. Satyamurti accepted the views expressed by Fazl-i-Husain and withdrew his adjournment motion. A newspaper commenting on the debate said: "A few more speeches from the Treasury Benches in the Fazl-i-Husain spirit, and the opposition will find the wind taken from their sails, for the man in the street, the real power even in a subject country like India, will find it difficult to distinguish the voice of Desai from the voice of Sir Fazl-i-Husain."[2]

[1] Legislative Assembly Proceedings, March, 1935.

[2] *Roy's Weekly* (Delhi), April 1, 1935: "Beware of Fazl-i-Husain Spirit."

## CHAPTER XIII

## *ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY*

INDIA being almost wholly an agricultural country, Fazl-i-Husain interested himself in agricultural production, trying not only to increase it but also to make it yield the maximum benefit to the peasant. As a first step, he promoted the establishment of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, which was intended to afford guidance and co-ordination to agricultural and veterinary research in India, and to make grants for schemes of research. The Council also acted as a clearing house for information, linking research work in India with that in other countries. In 1934, he added to the Council a marketing section in order to organize an efficient intelligence service in external markets regarding Indian products and the requirements of consumers, both abroad and in India. A scheme was sanctioned by which trade agents were to be appointed to push Indian products in foreign markets.[1]

This, however, could not solve the problem of the Indian peasant. The economic depression of 1931 caused a heavy fall in prices of agricultural produce, which made it difficult for the ryot to pay land revenue and water rates. One way of helping the agriculturist was to plan the crops of the country. Fazl-i-Husain, therefore, held a Crop Planning Conference in June 1934. The conference decided to set up a comprehensive machinery for a scientific study of important crop cultivation and a periodic stock-taking in relation to world market prospects to enable raising of crops best in demand. It warned provinces against adding to the production of rice and wheat as that would reduce

[1] Victor Trench: *Lord Willingdon in India*, 1934, p. 277.

prices still further, and made the useful suggestion that two million acres of land could be brought under linseed without reducing prices.

Fazl-i-Husain considered the Imperial Institute of Agricultural Research at Pusa important from the point of view of increasing agricultural production. Unfortunately, when its need was greatest the Bihar earthquake of 1934 ruined it and the question arose whether it should be repaired at a cost of seven lakhs or newly built at Delhi at a cost of thirty-six lakhs. Fazl-i-Husain saw great advantages in building it at Delhi and said that the selection of the site at Pusa was purely fortuitous. A large Government establishment at Pusa was available and when Henry Phipps of Chicago made a gift fo £30,000, the establishment was utilized for the purpose. The Institute had failed in scientific leadership mainly because of its isolation. While Calcutta was the Imperial capital, Pusa was within easy reach to be frequently visited, but now it was difficult to do so. The soil and climate of Pusa was typical only of a portion of North Bihar and could only raise crops without irrigation, while irrigation was an outstanding feature of Indian agriculture. The climate at Pusa was not conducive to experimental work in certain important branches and the production of some crops, such as cotton, was impossible. As against Pusa, Delhi had the great asset of accessibility to all interested in scientific agriculture. Here it was possible to carry out field experiments with both non-irrigated and irrigated crops, and at the same time the average alluvial soil was typical of a very large area in India. From the point of view of climate, there was a greater range of crops and there was no crop experimented with at Pusa which could not be grown at Delhi. To those who objected to a capital expenditure of thirty-six lakhs Fazl-i-Husain pointed out that the expenditure on reconstruction at Pusa was no guarantee that fresh earthquakes would not again involve fresh expenditure. Further, that it was proposed to meet the expenditure by a loan, which, according to the prevailing easy rates of interest was not an excessive burden on the tax-payer. In order to help the

country to face the depression it was necessary to stimulate purchasing power by undertaking expenditure on public works aimed at increasing the economic strength of the country. Subsequent events proved the validity of this argument in that the agricultural income of the country increased in 1934-35 by over four crores of rupees.

After a great deal of discussion, the Legislature sanctioned the expenditure, but as everything appeared to be reaching a fruitful close Sir James Grigg, the new Finance Member, wanted to quash the entire proposal. He did not wish to start his term of office with a large expenditure which would serve in future as a precedent for the starting of new development schemes. Fazl-i-Husain on the other hand regarded the question of the Institute as settled. Sir James could not tolerate opposition, and a dispute ensued. Fazl-i-Husain wrote to the Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, who was away in London, and while referring to the proposals of the Provincial Economic Conference said: "One of the proposals related to the transfer of Pusa and on our recommendation the Secretary of State sanctioned that proposal. When Grigg arrived, the Finance Department Secretariat seem to have given out that these proposals were the result of Schuster's own views and they had not their support. Grigg expressed a view that the sort of capital expenditure involved in the removal of Pusa was justifiable in the view of one set of financiers but that he belonged to the school of financiers who disapproved of it. On the other hand, Sir Frank Noyce and I held the view that the matter about Pusa was considered, discussed and decided, and the Secretary of State's sanction obtained. The fact that Schuster's successor holds views different from those of Schuster does not justify going back on a decision already arrived at and approved by the Secretary of State. . . A few days ago, His Excellency Sir George Stanley[1] told me that last week he had written to you on the subject and asked me whether I had any objection to the matter being reopened. I told him frankly that I had the very strongest possible objection to the matter being re-

[1] Officiating Viceroy during Lord Willingdon's absence.

opened: that you were a party to the Pusa transfer decision: that you were definitely for it: and that he had no cause to assume that you had changed your mind: that on the other hand he should assume that you hold the view now that you held a few weeks ago when you and your Government arrived at that decision and further that if any one wanted that decision to be reconsidered, he should state in writing the grounds on which he wanted reconsideration, and that then I should be able to state whether those grounds were, in my opinion, grounds for reconsideration or not. I am quite clear that the Secretary in a department cannot have a matter reopened. It is open to him, when the matter was first under discussion, to approach the Governor-General with his views in case his views differed from the views of his Member; but if he did not avail himself of that opportunity and his Member retired he cannot afterwards ask that the matter be reconsidered. As to a new Member, he is responsible only with reference to the decisions arrived at after his appointment. I am glad His Excellency Sir George Stanley accepted the correctness of my contention and said that the matter must now go to the Standing Committee. I thought I might tell you this little controversy that had arisen about Pusa."[1] A little later he wrote again: "You say, ask Grigg to open the strings of the purse. Well, I find him terribly stingy and miserly. I suppose, after a few skirmishes, we shall be able to understand each other better, but at present he absolutely refuses to incur any capital expenditure and is ostentatiously and violently opposed to the scheme of work which Schuster initiated last year. We are carrying on and looking forward to your return so as to arrive at a satisfactory understanding." When Lord Willingdon returned to India, the dispute became more acute, and the Viceroy was obliged to bring the matter again before the Executive Council. Votes in the Council were equally divided, and Fazl-i-Husain resolved to resign if the decision went against him. Lord Willingdon yielded, Fazl-i-Husain won the day, and the foundation stone of the Institute was laid at Delhi in February 1935.

[1] July 30, 1934.

Fazl-i-Husain was anxious, as he had been in the Punjab, to devise legislation in various provinces for the reduction of indebtedness among the peasantry. In 1934 a good opportunity was offered by acute agrarian trouble in the U.P. On account of the fall in prices the landlords were unable to collect their rents, and when the Congress preached non-payment of rent the position became worse for them. The landlords appealed to Government, but Government could only help with coercive measures which could not bring money into the pockets of the landlords. They, therefore, showed willingness to compromise with the Congress. Government intervened and shared the loss with the landlords, and, according to Fazl-i-Husain, in order to show solicitude for the agriculturist brought in various Bills such as the Encumbered Estates' Bill, the Usurious Loans' Bill, the Regulation of Execution Bill, and the Regulation of Sales' Bill. When the Bills came to the Government of India for sanction Fazl-i-Husain unhesitatingly pointed out that the object of this legislation was not to improve the economic position of the peasantry but to tide over the current political difficulties, and to use legislation as a tactical and political move against the Congress. He said that the scaling down or reduction of interest amounted to very little because the debts were of long standing and included a large element of interest, and if they were to be treated as principal and the outstanding interest was also to be added to that principal the peasant was given no relief. Compound interest would be definitely introduced, and the debtors' agreement to it secured, which showed that the relief was sentimental rather than real. The provision which permitted the creditor to withdraw even after the pronouncement of the decree by the Judge clearly showed that the debtor was better off under the ordinary law of the land. In spite of the protests of Fazl-i-Husain the defective U.P. legislation was agreed to by the Government of India. Thus, in the Legislative Assembly when a member proposed that a Committee of Experts be appointed to enquire into agricultural distress and devise means of improving the conditions of

the agricultural classes, Fazl-i-Husain frankly said that the existing legislation in the country did not provide the necessary relief to the peasantry. He admitted his failure to devise a scheme for putting the rural population of India on a sound footing and added that all that he had succeeded in doing was in the nature of palliatives and not of substantial relief. What was required for the salvation of agricultural India was the adoption of a national agricultural reconstruction programme pushed through vigourously and logically.

As regards movements directed towards agrarian reform, Fazl-i-Husain was anxious that they should be encouraged and, at any rate, not suppressed by Government. Whatever may have been the ultimate goal of Communist activity in India, it helped to create a new consciousness in the peasantry and the working classes of their rights, it made the Press and political leaders increasingly alive to the immense power of mass action as a political weapon, it made the Congress and other political bodies recognize the need to organize the labouring masses in order to associate them with the general movement for the political advancement of the country: and finally, it made everyone realize that no programme for the betterment of the people could stand which did not include genuine relief for the toiling peasantry of India. Government was, however, anxious to suppress the communist movement. In 1934, the Anti-Imperialist League, Nawjawan Bharat Sabha and the Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party were declared illegal, and drastic legislation vesting full powers in the executive (to the exclusion of Judicial scrutiny) was proposed against the Communist Party. Fazl-i-Husain was strongly against the proposed legislation, and argued that communism was not an immediate menace to require suppression by such legislation. "In the rural world," he said, "the position of the tenant is not strong. In the forthcoming reforms, enfranchisement of a certain section of tenants may enable them to improve their position. The legislation outlined in the Executive Council Sub-Committee proposal is such as to range Government definitely

on the side of the existing order and to discourage, at all events, indirectly, reforms in that direction. It may have another unfortunate result in promoting agrarian or class strife instead of allowing the advent of reforms with the enfranchisement of a section of the masses to promote reforms."

It may be argued that these were particular problems and that Fazl-i-Husain lived in the past and had no comprehensive plan for the economic development of India, and that he did not lay sufficient stress in his public and private utterances on industrialization as a means of solving the problem of poverty in India. The fact is that he was acutely conscious of the necessity of industrialization, but he was a realist and felt that the discussion of such an issue was premature. As matters stood, no far-reaching national reconstruction programme was possible so long as British economic interests determined the policy of the Government of India and the Government of India was unable to resist dictation from London. The Ottawa Trade Agreement of 1932 had already enlarged the system of imperial preference and tended to abstract Indian trade from its natural channels. Indian trade was not complementary with that of England and its trend was away from the Empire, but Ottawa reduced India's capacity for bargaining by tying her hands in respect of far too large a number of commodities, so that she found she had hardly anything to offer to foreign countries in return for any concessions she might seek from them. Fazl-i-Husain felt that the tendency in London was towards an increasing desire for exploitation. Referring to the Ottawa Conference he wrote in his diary: "We know nothing. We have no programme, we do not know what to push and where to push. We have an export trade of sorts but it is what others are pleased to allow us and I have suspicions it is determined by the shippers who bring imports to us and must in their own interests take back something. This is the position against the economic vultures and beasts of prey, hawks who keep an eye all over the world to pick up the flesh wherever it may be if they can at all manage it. This does

not speak very well for the British administration."[1] On another occasion he wrote: "We were talking the other day about India having a Navy. The Civil Traffic and Cargo Traffic — what organization? What capital? — obtaining Reforms will not and cannot make up for such deficiency as still exists and the question is: should we make good these deficiencies and then take over or take over and then make good these deficiencies. The reply must to a very large extent depend upon John Bull's attitude. If he behaves fairly a large section of Indians will be patient, but the truth is that John Bull's fairness and honesty has disappeared and hence the trouble. Even in comparatively trivial matters John Bull is for his pound of flesh and so the most patient of us become despondent."[2]

The British have never hesitated to condemn social evils in India, yet the Government has always been reluctant to encourage social legislation. In 1932, as an offshoot of the Poona Pact, Gandhi started a campaign to place the Depressed Classes on terms of equality with caste Hindus and to remove their social and religious disabilities. The Madras Government sought the approval of the Governor-General to the introduction in the Madras Council of a Removal of the Depressed Classes' Religious Disabilities' Bill, and a Temple Entry Disabilities' Removal Bill. The Bills required that it should be open to any member of the Depressed Classes to enter a temple and worship there, and also removed disabilities arising out of usages regarding untouchability in Civil or Criminal courts. The Bills were strongly supported by Hindu leaders of practically all shades of opinion and it was expected that they would probably be carried, for even those who were not in favour of them would be reluctant to do anything which might alienate their constituents.

Government, on the other hand, was afraid that if the Bills were passed it would strengthen the Congress and give a fresh impetus to the national movement. Sir B. L. Mitter, the Law Member, agreed. Fazl-i-Husain, however, urged that sanction to the introduction of Madras

[1] Diary—May 6, 1932.
[2] Diary—January 5, 1932.

Bills should not be withheld, for their subject was a proper subject for provincial legislation and was analogous to the Punjab Sikh Gurdwaras Act of 1925. The alternative was direct action or revolution. Government, he went on, had been saying for several years that the vast massses of untouchables were badly treated by caste Hindus and now that the caste Hindus wanted to remove this stigma from the Hindu community, Government should not stand in their way in opposition to all educated and political-minded Hindu India, and in opposition to the sympathetic attitude of Muslims and Christians in this matter. Although it was admitted that refusal would expose Government to severe criticism, yet the sanction was withheld and the much needed reform had to wait for Congress Government under provincial autonomy.

Medical Councils had existed in various provinces for nearly a quarter of a century, but they were only concerned with the standard of local medical education and the professional conduct of those on their registers. There were interprovincial relations between several of these Councils, but there was no uniformity as to terms of mutual recognition. At the same time there was no reciprocity between Indian Provincial Medical Councils and the General Medical Council of Great Britain, with the result that Indian students and practitioners seeking higher qualifications suffered and always found themselves at the mercy of medical institutions in Great Britain. Several teaching institutions in India were not recognized as fully as they merited. Within India itself there was a lack of co-ordination in medical studies and research which hampered the progress of the profession in the country. The need for an All-India Medical Council was obvious, yet a conference of provincial representatives held in 1929 decided against it, as a result of which the General Medical Council of Great Britain decided to refuse recognition to medical degrees of Indian Universities.

Fazl-i-Husain, who had just joined the Viceroy's Council, forthwith held a fresh conference of provincial representatives. After a great deal of shuffling on the part of those

who had committed themselves only a year ago against the idea, it was decided that the creation of an All-India Medical Council was essential and that legislation should be undertaken. Fazl-i-Husain prepared the Medical Council Bill but the Secretary of State strongly disapproved of it on the ground that there was no provision for the recognition in India of U.K. degrees conferring a right to practice in India. Fazl-i-Husain was opposed to such a provision, since that would take away from the Indian Medical Council the counter with which to bargain with the General Medical Council for recognition of Indian degrees. The Secretary of State refused to agree but ultimately Fazl-i-Husain convinced him that his wishes would prove fatal to the Bill in the Assembly and he reluctantly agreed.

The Indian Medical Council Act was passed and provided for a democratic body drawn from local Governments, universities and the medical profession. Pleading for the Bill in the Legislative Assembly, Fazl-i-Husain said: "We want our medical institutions to be run efficiently, to be run in a way so as to attract scholars of medicine from abroad, in some subjects if not in all subjects. Given that efficiency at home is there any reason why we should not command honourable recognition abroad? Only when we are sure of ourselves can we expect respect of others."

## CHAPTER XIV

## *REPRESSION AND REFORMS*

IN 1930, while Gandhi started the Civil Disobedience movement, Lord Irwin inaugurated the dual policy of severe repression and discussion of reforms. From the very outset Fazl-i-Husain was opposed to the policy of repression, and he remained a staunch opponent of it throughout the next five years. He wanted Government to act with moderation and in a strictly constitutional manner. He was opposed to the arrest of Gandhi,[1] believing that the arrest was bound to be followed by disturbances in Maharashtra and subsequent bitterness resulting from conflict, irritation, riots, arrests and shootings.[2] Repression, he said, ultimately defeats its own purpose. He was opposed to rule by Ordinances and said that in spite of the views of the local Governments and the Home Department, the Press and News-sheet Ordinance should not be renewed. The tendency towards issuing Ordinances applying to the whole of India, in view of the recently re-elected local legislatures, he said, was unconstitutional, just as it was unconstitutional to issue an Ordinance when a meeting of the Central Legislature could be conveniently held.

In 1931, with regard to the Bengal Emergency Powers' Ordinance, he wrote: "Terrorism in Bengal has led to proposals for restoration of Law and Order there. It is intended to have military round-ups of the sort done in 1930 in the Peshawar district. It is 'Civil Martial Law,' i.e. civil authorities are in charge but the machinery is of the Army. I warned the Executive Council of the protests it will invite, but the Ordinance has been approved by the Law

[1] Diary—April 29, 1930.
[2] Diary—May 9, 1930.

Member, a Bengali Hindu, and was supported by Bhore. So there was no occasion for me to do anything except to utter my note of warning. It will be a duel between the Hindus and the English, poor Bengal Muslims are too weak and disorganized to take a respectable share in this, one way or another. In fact this may be made the occasion for starting Civil Disobedience again."[1]

Equally forcible was his objection to the Special Chittagong Ordinance. "Terrorism," he said, "flourishes where the people at large are not in sympathy with Government and some are actively hostile to it. Military demonstrations, vigorous pursuit of criminals go far to secure overt submission, but the real object, i.e. efficient Government in which the people have confidence, is not secured until there is contact established between the Government and the people, and a considerable section of the people believe that Government is doing all it can for their good. Where such a contact exists and can be made closer than it is, terrorism does not spread and if it has spread it can be very considerably reduced. But where the contact between the Government and the people is but little and political institutions with strong anti-Government programme have got such a contact established no amount of show of military display or strong police action, not even the worst sort of repression, can achieve much success for any length of time."

Government policy was on the whole for unabated and unrestricted repression by means of Ordinances, additional police, lathi assaults, firing, arrests, vigorous prosecutions, declaration of every variety of association as unlawful, gagging of the Press and banning of picketing and processions. Sir Harry Haig said that Congress co-operation was not necessary, and anti-Congress parties should be encouraged. Parleys with the Congress and a "gentleman's agreement" with Gandhi was fantastic. Sir George Rainey told the Assembly: "You had better call off your Civil Disobedience movement first and then we will consider what we can do with regard to the conciliatory policy." When the move-

[1] Diary—November 17, 1931.

ment reached its height 25,000 Congressmen were in jail. Fazl-i-Husain repeatedly raised his voice against this policy, and asked for the release of political prisoners, if not all at once, at least in batches, especially after the suspension of the movement in May 1933. As a result, a graduated scale for the release of prisoners was adopted.

Fazl-i-Husain held definite views about counteracting the Civil Disobedience movement and told Lord Lothian: "Ordinances and repression will not kill the Congress, and that on their disappearance Congress will emerge stronger than before, because at the next lot of Ordinances such Indian opinion as may be in favour of the present ones will turn against Government. Already moderates want Government to end this repression as Congress has been sufficiently punished. Repression generates hatred both on social and communal lines, because the Congress school of thought cannot disappear, though civil disobedience and picketing may cease for the time being."[1] He suggested an alternative programme of constructive nation-building including the establishing of panchayats, Boards of Arbitration and Co-operative Societies, relief of indebtedness, expansion of beneficent activities, cottage industries, provincial autonomy and Dominion Status—in short, a strong liberal nationalist programme of uplift which could cause a diversion in political thought. What was required was the creation of an atmosphere, a spirit of service and constructive effort. This could be done not by the old *Aman Sabhas* or the Loyalty Leagues, but by vigorous and popular parties which were prepared to dissociate themselves from the Civil Disobedience movement. During periods of political upheaval, opposition cannot be disorganized except by a rival organization to which people can attach themselves. Lord Lothian agreed with these views, but Government adopted the easier method of repression.

While recognizing the tremendous importance of Gandhi as an awakener of the people of India, Fazl-i-Husain was critical of his methods. Once, in talking to Mrs. Naidu, he pointed out to her the mistakes made by Gandhi, mistakes

[1] Diary—April 29, 1932.

of a nature which could not be described as raising the standard of political life: "(1) Gandhi is not a good judge of individuals, e.g. Shaukat Ali. (2) He does not see ahead, but is an opportunist, e.g. Khilafat and strict nationalism; bringing ulema into politics just to rope Muslims into the Congress fold. (3) As altogether unreliable and anything but frank, e.g. solution of the Punjab — any settlement arrived at by Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs is acceptable to him — how could he refuse to accept it? (4) He is fond of quibbling, too many reservations; these are a part and parcel of politics but he professes to elevate politics. (5) He is not well informed as to the views and sentiments of various sections of the people and readily lends his ear to those round about him, and believes things which if critically examined bear evidence of inherent improbability. (6) He shirks the responsibility of coming to independent decisions, lest thereby he offend some of his supporters, e.g. his being sole representative of the Congress at the Round Table Conference. This was due to his inability to select a delegation from the Congress without causing disruption; an act of a third-rate leader or one who prefers to be a dictator. (7) He is no longer able to lead but only to follow. The position is beyond his control, e.g. Bhagat Singh — his intercession with Irwin for a reprieve and the Karachi resolution. (8) At the Round Table Conference he tried to do too much on his own, and dabbled in matters with which he was not familiar. He also made opponents all round. So he lost in prestige and influence, got the Congress isolated and lost the show of general vague goodwill and support which other political parties in India gave as long as he was fighting British Government and dealing in generalities."[1]

In spite of this critical view of Gandhi Fazl-i-Husain did not agree with S. C. Bose that the future rested with a socialistic dictatorship because that "did not tackle the physical sanction — the Army. As long as the British did not weaken at home, there was little chance of violence in India securing independence. Therefore, Indian politics cannot

[1] Diary—February 22, 1932.

but remain more or less non-violent, and I think Gandhi's scheme holds good, though much cannot be expected from it."[1] A little later he wrote again in his diary: "His (Gandhi's) political programme has been tried and has failed to achieve success. His promises of Swaraj in the following year have not materialised. His dramatic fasts, breaches of law, threats to fill jails, vanquishing of his opponents by soul force, all these have been tried during the last fifteen years or so, and have failed to achieve success so far as one can see. His arguments are illogical and faulty; his programme defective and unconvincing. The author of Satyagraha committed himself to the logical absurdity of supporting one of the combatants during the Great War, whereas an Englishman might base his pasifism on reason, he (Gandhi) based it on sentiment. His ideas about the depressed classes and his programme of uniting Hindus, including the depressed classes, have also met with failure. Instead of uniting Hindus, he has definitely disunited them."[2] After 1932, Gandhi, it is true, did not stand very high in public esteem because of his failure to bring about communal unity, but his appeal to the Hindu masses was still sufficiently powerful for him to regain before long his unrivalled position among political leaders of India. Not being a mass leader himself, Fazl-i-Husain showed lack of imagination in estimating the permanence of Gandhi's hold over political India.

Fazl-i-Husain was member of the Viceroy's Council during 1930-35, the critical years during which the Reforms' Scheme was formulated and finally enacted as the Government of India Act, 1935. Throughout his term of office he endeavoured to counteract diehard tendencies among the British. He was opposed to the holding of a Round Table Conference as it was a sure means of exhibiting conflict among Indians, and side-tracking the vital issue of the transfer of power into Indian hands. When, however, the Conference was held he tried to make it a success. He believed that if the devolution of power was to come by vivisection of

[1] Diary—July 10, 1935.

[2] Diary—August 12, 1935.

any part of India or by a clean cut division between British India and the Indian States, that responsibility and power were not worth having.

He strongly disapproved of some important recommendations of the Simon Report, such as an elastic constitution which left all discretion to the British Parliament or the Governor-General and the Governors. He demanded instead a clear and precise definition of the scope allowed to representative institutions, and asked for transfer of all subjects except foreign policy and relations with the Indian States. He objected to the control of the Army by the Governor-General. Its budget, he said, should be votable, and the search-light of public criticism must be brought to bear on it. India's Army should not serve any purpose other than purely Indian, because Indians would resent the idea of Imperial considerations requiring occupation of India by a non-Indian Army. He objected to the excessive weightage (40%) given to the States, and said that on no account should nominated State representatives be allowed to administer British India.

These were large issues, involving immense changes in Anglo-Indian relations, and Fazl-i-Husain was unable to have his views accepted to any large extent, though that was no reason for not repeatedly expressing them. He had, however, some success with his proposals for provincial autonomy. He objected to the Simon Report giving overriding powers to Governors in the interests of 'tranquillity and safety.' This, he said, was an extremely dangerous formula, and would permit interference on any pretext in matters which should be the sole responsibility of the popular ministers. If these could not be taken away, they should be redefined as 'Police and Justice,' which would narrow their scope. Eventually they were defined as 'Law and Order.' He opposed the suggestion that the Centre should co-ordinate a policy of 'Law and Order' in the provinces. We cannot have, he said, provincial autonomy and at the same time a centralized administration of law and order. This was substantially agreed to. With regard to the scheme for putting security services, their dis-

cipline, promotion and postings, outside the scope of the ministries, he said, it would reduce provincial autonomy to a shadow, and instead wanted the ministries to have complete control over services, and recruitment to services by the Secretary of State should be stopped. It was agreed that the ministries should have control over services, though the Secretary of State could recruit for certain named services.

Fazl-i-Husain strongly supported objection to nomination to the provincial legislatures, and his view was accepted. He held the plan for an official element in the cabinets to be objectionable and reactionary, and an invasion of the natural growth of ministerial responsibility. This proposal was dropped. Fazl-i-Husain maintained that the proposal for second chambers in U.P., Bihar, Orissa and Bengal was reactionary, but Government insisted on implementing it. In order not to encroach upon the responsibility of the ministries to the legislatures, and to give ample opportunity to various communities to arrive at mutual settlements among themselves, he wanted the provisions for the minorities not to be embodied in the Statute but to be included in the Instrument of Instructions to the Governors. This was agreed to.

In connection with individual provinces Sir Malcolm Hailey recommended that provincial autonomy should not be extended to the Punjab on account of conflicting minority interests, the possibility of one community not being represented in Government, and the possible lowering of efficiency in the administration. Sir Malcolm proposed that since "in the purely provincial field parliament cannot entirely divest itself of powers of supervision and control exercised through the Central Government," the Governor should be given larger powers than he had enjoyed hitherto, and on account of his increased responsibilities he should have a colleague in the nature of a Deputy Governor who should have power to interfere with and exercise full control over ministers. There should not be any Chief Minister, and the ministers should be selected by the Governor himself. Finally, as before, there should be members in the

legislature nominated exclusively by the Governor. Fazl-i-Husain, as in 1917-18, refuted all the charges of the Governor and said that the Punjab had worked the Reforms successfully and should receive reforms on the same scale as the rest of India. As in 1919, Fazl-i-Husain was successful in helping to win equality of treatment for the Punjab.

With regard to Burma he was strongly of the view that the Burma Government was acting wrongly in encouraging the movement for separation. In 1932 at the General Election the anti-separationists secured a majority, but Government hesitated to declare against separation in spite of the promise made by the Prime Minister to decide according to the wishes of the Burmese electorate. Fazl-i-Husain wrote to Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan to impress upon the Secretary of State his view that "I believe the British Indian view is that Burma does not want separation, that it should be allowed to remain a part of India as hithertofore, no case for separation having been made out. This is the Indian Muslim view and it is a matter on which Muslims and Hindu India can very well unite."[1] From a military and strategic point of view he considered the separation of Burma dangerous to the safety and unity of India. The disastrous effects of the policy of separation, noticeable in 1941-42, are too obvious to require any comment.

On the threshold of provincial autonomy and the federation, there was an imminent danger in India of provincialism developing to the detriment of national unity. Fazl-i-Husain, therefore, considered it necessary to create all-India organizations which would counteract centrifugal tendencies. The danger was greatest in education. In order to qualify the electorate to choose the electors and to

[1] June 26, 1933.

In 1931 the Congress resolved as follows:—

"The Congress recognises the right of the people of Burma to claim separation from India, to establish an independent Burma State or to remain an autonomous partner in a Free India with a right of separation at any time they may desire to exercise it. The Congress, however, condemns the endeavour of the British Government to force the separation of Burma without giving adequate opportunity to the Burmese people to express their views and against the declared wishes of their national political organizations. The endeavour seems to be deliberately engineered to perpetuate domination so as to make Burma, together with Singapore, by reason of the presence of oil and her strategic position, strongholds of Imperialism in Eastern Asia."

give then a common outlook, it was necessary to co-ordinate education in provinces. Fazl-i-Husain proposed the revival of the All-India Advisory Board of Education. Some provincial Governments resisted, but he used his personal influence with the ministers concerned and persuaded them to agree to it. A few Indian States, particularly Hyderabad, were even more reluctant. Writing to Sir Akbar Hydari, he observed: "This work will be as much for Indian India as for British India, and in the interest of the future united India it is of the utmost importance that a federal organization of an All-India nature should be set in working order."[1] Three years of persuasion induced the States to fall in line with the rest of India. Financial objections were met by reducing the expenditure to the barest minimum possible. Fazl-i-Husain recalled Sir George Anderson, his erstwhile Director of Public Instruction in the Punjab, from Hyderabad to start the work of the Board. Within a short time it justified the hopes placed in it, and Government admitted in 1937 that "to judge from the action taken by the different provinces and their reaction to the advice of the Board, there is reason to hope that the Board will acquire considerable influence on educational theory and practice throughout India."[1] For similar purposes of greater co-ordination among provinces Fazl-i-Husain proposed the formation of the Central Medical and Public Health Advisory Board and the Central Advisory Board of Local Self-Government, and the former came into existence in 1937.

[1] Letter dated June 19, 1933.

[2] *Progress of Education in India* : 1932-37, Chapter II (6).

## CHAPTER XV

## *REHABILITATION OF MUSLIMS*

THROUGHOUT his term as a member of the Viceroy's Council, Fazl-i-Husain laboured to promote Muslim interests in every sphere of the administration. He made sure that Muslims were adequately represented in the executive Councils of all provinces. In 1934, when a vacancy occurred in Bengal, he successfully asked for the appointment of a Muslim, and wrote to the Governor of Bengal to say: "What I wanted to impress upon you most strongly was the need of selecting the best possible Muslim. A man who is not really able and who is not possessed of some influence can do no good to anybody, whether to Government or his country or to his community. As you are already aware, the composition of services in Bengal is far from satisfactory from the public point of view, and in Muslim circles it is regarded as scandalous. The Bengal Government has for nearly thirty years tried to improve matters and would have put matters right if orders alone could achieve the object, but to issue orders is one thing, to see that they are executed is a different thing. In the past the Muslim community in India has had occasion to complain that the best available candidates are not always selected, with the result that the object in view, i.e. of putting right long standing grievances and of demonstrating that Muslims can contribute official administrators to the service of the country as well as, if not better than, any other community has not been achieved."[1]

In the same way he endeavoured to ensure that Muslims were adequately represented in the High Courts. His

[1] Letter to Sir John Anderson, dated March 27, 1934.

timely intervention secured the appointment of a Muslim on the Calcutta Bench.[1] In 1935 for the Madras and Rangoon Judgeships he insisted that Muslims be appointed, and if suitable ones were not found locally, they should be secured from the Punjab or the U.P. In the matter of nominations to the Assembly and to the Council of State he always ventilated the claims of Muslims. No Muslim had been appointed to the post of High Commissioner for India since it was created. Fazl-i-Husain ceaselessly agitated for nearly two years through every conceivable channel and succeeded in having a Muslim appointed.[2]

No matter concerning the welfare of Muslims was too small for his attention. In 1933, for example, the Bharatpur Council of State announced that voluntary subscriptions to a Meo High School started by the Deputy Commissioner at Gurgaon were illegal. Fazl-i-Husain protested against this unreasonable notification and asked for its cancellation. Political Department agreed and Meo High School became a successful institution. In 1930, a Muslim complained that the custodian of the Delhi Fort permitted visitors to enter Moti Masjid with shoes on. The Deputy Director General of Archaeology refused to go into the matter and said that the rules neither permitted nor prohibited entry into the masjid with shoes on. Fazl-i-Husain reprimanded the Deputy Director and referring to instructions issued in 1913, prohibiting entry into the mosque with shoes on, said that this incident did not indicate greater responsiveness on the part of certain Government officials to public opinion than what prevailed seventeen years ago, and ordered that instructions should be issued that the administration of archaeological monuments such as mosques and

[1] Letter dated the March 22, 1934, to Sir Harry Haig, the Home Member.

[2] In a letter dated September 24, 1935, to Sir Abdul Qadir, he said: "In the matter of filling appointments the Viceroy has been thinking of discharging his commitments to individual Muslims rather than fill the posts more suitably, and if in every case he had succeeded, the result would have been from the Muslim point of view disastrous. It is in the best interests of the Muslim community as well as of the Government that a man who would fill the post (High Commissioner for India) suitably and be a credit to the post should fill it, and it should not be felt that he is intellectually and culturally much below the standard of his two distinguished predecessors, otherwise it will do no credit to the Muslim community in the eyes of the public men in England and in Europe."

temples should be carried on with respect due to places of worship. He also ordered that galoshes of some sort should be kept available to enable visitors to see the interior of the mosques, and notices to this effect should be displayed at all such places.

He was eager for all that Government and legislation could reasonably do to afford comfort and protection to the pilgrims, so that their trip to Hedjaz might be as comfortable and as cheap as possible. A travelled person, he said, is a better citizen than an untravelled person. A large number of people from different countries came to perform Haj, and Indian Muslims benefitted by meeting them. He prepared three Bills in this connection. The Hedjaz Pilgrim Guides' Bill regulated the activities of those who offered to assist Muslim pilgrims to Hedjaz. It was a common complaint that the so-called guides cheated and swindled ignorant pilgrims by offering to purchase for them railway and ship tickets, goods and other things. The Bill provided for the licencing of pilgrim guides, and penalized those who offered to act as guides without a licence. It was hoped that the Bill would stop malpractices but the introduction of the Bill in the Assembly was delayed till after Fazl-i-Husain left the Government of India, when sufficient interest was not shown and the Bill was not proceeded with.

The Indian Merchant Shipping (Amendment) Act, 1933, provided for the comfort of the Hajis. It laid down that a shipping company must supply suitably cooked food on a small payment not exceeding one rupee per day, while those who could afford them should be provided with extra dishes. It also laid down that a minimum space of sixteen square feet should be allowed for every pilgrim. In order to obviate the risk of pilgrims being stranded in Hedjaz for want of funds, it required that pilgrims should either obtain return tickets or retain a deposit for the return journey. Finally, the period of waiting at Jeddah and at ports of embarkation was reduced to the minimum possible by making it obligatory for the shipping companies to advertise the approximate dates of sailing well in advance.

The Port Haj Committee Act, 1932 established Committees in the principal ports and provided for their proper working and financing in order to collect and disseminate information useful to pilgrims, to advise and assist them during their stay at the port, to give relief to indigent pilgrims, to negotiate with railways and shipping companies for securing travelling facilities, to find suitable Muslims for employment by shipping companies on pilgrim ships, and to bring grievances to the notice of the authorities concerned. It was recognized that these were constructive measures of great benefit to Muslims. The Muslims were brought into effective contact with the shipping companies and the worst features of the administration of European and other firms, which had made fabulous profits out of the poor, ignorant and pious Hajis, were removed.

The greatest contribution of Fazl-i-Husain to the protection of Muslim interests was the reservation of Muslim representation in services. The existing position was most unsatisfactory. In 1925 Government reserved 33% of appointments in the Central services for minority communities, with the exception of certain highly technical posts. This policy was never followed in its true spirit, and in practise the exception was gradually extended to cover all vacancies, regardless of the nature of the qualifications required. Further, many of the vacancies which did go to them were secured by other minorities out of all proportion to their numerical strength. Fazl-i-Husain was of the view that if agreement on representation in services on the same basis as representation in legislatures could be secured between Hindus and Muslims, a great deal of the communal trouble would come to an end. Since Muslims were the only minority whose representation was considerably below its population basis he wanted 25% vacancies to be reserved for Muslims separately from those allowed for other minorities. After protracted discussions, in 1934 the Government of India Resolution on services was passed admitting that relief to Muslims had not been secured, and for the future laid down that for direct recruitment to the I.C.S., the Central Services and the subordinate services

under the Government of India, 25% vacancies should be reserved for Muslims, and 8½% for other minority communities. It added that if members of other minority communities obtained less than their reserved percentage in open competition, and if duly qualified candidates were not available for nomination, the residue of 8½% would also be available for qualilfied Muslims.

The way in which Fazl-i-Husain helped the Muslims in the Kashmir agitation is an excellent indication of the tact and ability with which he led them and protected their interests. Muslims had long standing grievances in regard to the absence of their representation and voice in the administration of the State. Trouble arose in 1931 and the Punjab Muslims evinced great interest in the welfare of their co-religionists in Kashmir; they went in *Jathas* and offered non-violent resistence; many were killed or injured; there were 7,000 prisoners in Jammu State alone. The Maharaja went on making promises but doing nothing, while the volume of agitation went on increasing. Fazl-i-Husain was greatly perturbed and at once secured confirmation of various official and non-official reports. He placed them before the Viceroy and urged that the Sovereign Authority must discharge its obligation to the people. He pointed out that the Muslims were not receiving fair treatment, and pressed again and again for an impartial enquiry committee which should be supplied with facts and figures about riots, loss of life and action taken by Government. As he considered that this was going to prepare the background for the satisfaction of India Muslim demands at the Round Table Conference an enquiry seemed imperative.[1] In deference to the views expressed by Fazl-i-Husain, Government appointed an enquiry committee under Sir Bertrand Glancy and decided that if the Durbar refused, it should be overruled. The Maharajah refused to admit a British officer, on the ground that his appointment would increase the Muslim demands and he was not prepared to give any further concessions to the Muslims. The Maharajah was forced to appoint the Glancy Committee,

[1] Diary—November 10, 1931.

including four non-officials, two of whom were Muslims. British troops were sent and the atrocities complained of against State troops came to an end.

Fazl-i-Husain then diverted the energies of the Muslims into constructive channels. Through the Press and his friends in the Punjab he appealed to the Punjab Muslims to assist their co-religionists with legal advice and funds to enable Kashmir Muslims to have justice done to them. He asked them to substantiate their grievances as well as their demands in as thorough a manner as possible. At the same time he asked the Viceroy to approach the Maharajah with the request that in order to create a suitable atmosphere in which ill-feeling and hostility might disappear and enquiries might be conducted in a spirit of fair play, the Maharajah should release political prisoners. In return the All-India Kashmir Committee could be induced to stop sending *Jathas* from the Punjab and creating agitation within the State. The Maharajah agreed, and declared an extensive amnesty. The enquiry was successfully completed, and as a result of the recommendations of the Glancy Committee a Legislative Assembly was established, 10% of the population was enfranchised, and the Muslims were given separate electorates with 60% representation in the legislature.

Although Fazl-i-Husain was very eager to secure communal representation for Muslims in services, this did not mean that in individual appointments he was communally-minded or showed favouritism. He preferred Indians to Europeans, and among Indians the only criterion was efficiency. This principle is well illustrated by the promotions and appointments made in his own Department during his term of office. Although the Under Secretary was the only Muslim officer in the Department and was the son of a friend, yet when his work was found unsatisfactory, Fazl-i-Husain did not hesitate to dispense with his services.[1]

A more significant example is the way in which he supported his Hindu Joint Secretary. Shortly after he

[1] Diary—October 13, 1930.

became Member he wrote in his diary: "Bajpai is working well and I show him every consideration. There is no reason why he should not get on in the Department. I want work and a fair amount of discipline. Anyone giving this has my support."[1] In 1932, Fazl-i-Husain recommended Bajpai for Secretaryship. The Viceroy wanted to appoint a European instead. Since Bajpai had competently discharged the duties of a Secretary when officiating on two previous occasions, the Viceroy objected on grounds of seniority, against which Fazl-i-Husain quoted instances of Europeans of the same seniority who had been appointed Secretaries. The Viceroy then offered to appoint a Muslim, thirteen years senior to Bajpai. Fazl-i-Husain refused in spite of the fact that the Muslim in question was a friend and a number of Muslim deputations pressed his claims because there was no Muslim Secretary in the Government of India. He recorded in his diary: "H. E. called me again this evening. He is very strongly against Bajpai, and he does not want me now to take Latifi, and suggested taking an Englishman, one Sloan. I restated my position — history of Bajpai's progress in the Secretariat and that I could see no justification for obstructing his progress."[2] The Viceroy thought of bringing the matter before the Council but the possibility of a defeat restrained him from doing so.[3]

The Viceroy then proposed that a European should officiate as Secretary. Fazl-i-Husain refused to agree and wrote: "This is very awkward, and I sent a letter to H.E. saying I recommend that Ramchandra (Deputy Secretary) should officiate. I am afraid H.E. will not think well of me for opposing his wishes persistently but what can I do? H.E. wants Reid to officiate as Secretary during Bajpai's

[1] Diary—August 5, 1930.

[2] Diary—March 28, 1932.

[3] "The Secretary, Bhore and Mitter are for Bajpai, and I understand Schuster is also favourable, so the possible active dissidents are limited to two or possibly three excluding the Viceroy. If there is an acute dispute it may mean equally divided opinion, three Indians and Schuster *versus* H. E., Commander-in-Chief, Rainey and Haig, but I doubt whether Haig will take such a decided attitude. As luck would have it such matters as have been taken to Executive Council have been mine—indicating differences of opinion between H.E. and me." (Diary—April 1, 1932.)

leave while I think Ram Chandra is a better man. H.E. relies upon seniority and I on merit. The question has its racial aspect. I don't think Reid has sufficient guts to control the Department."[1] The Viceroy did not agree, and persisted in asking for Reid's appointment, and finally when he wanted to appoint Reid against Fazl-i-Husain's wishes, Fazl-i-Husain agreed provided it was decided that Bajpai would become permanent Secretary.[2] This made Bajpai permanent Secretary and Ram Chandra Joint Secretary.

In the appointment of his successor Fazl-i-Husain regarded merit as the sole criterion for selection. In 1932 when he was to proceed on leave, he secured the appointment of Zafrulla Khan with great difficulty. He recorded in his Diary: "It will be a very startling appointment, a comparatively very young man, being put in India's cabinet —well, there you are — merit should be the sole test and I really cannot think of a more competent man."[3] Some Muslims objected to Zafrulla Khan as an Ahmadi and started a violent agitation, but Fazl-i-Husain faced it courageously, and on his retirement he again successfully espoused his cause against a very large number of prominent Muslims.

[1] Diary—April 5, 1932.

[2] "H.E. has pressed me again to have Reid as Secretary. I think he is making a mistake, and putting himself in the wrong. There is no precedent for it but let him go on like this. H.E. has put himself in the wrong already more than once. 1. When he lost his temper in Council and then apologised —the matter was personal and I did not think it in good taste to force him to apologise in Council. 2. He nominated Mehr Shah to the Round Table Conference without consulting me, he did not consult any member of the Council, or the Governor—it was a scandal. 3. Regarding Public Services Commission, he did not accept my advice, but his excuse was that it was Crerar's case, and he did not accept Crerar's advice either. 4. Then his quarrel over Bajpai—(a) Permanent appointment, (b) Temporary appointment for a week or so. He gave in regarding (a), and I gave in regarding (b). For officiating appointment, I asked for Latifi, and he has not preferred to release him, and insists upon Reid filling the post. 5. He is wobbling over the Agent in South Africa. He is doing this, probably because I do not give in to him, where a question of principle is involved, I insist upon recording my dissent." (Diary—April 18, 1932.)

[3] Diary—May 17, 1932.

## CHAPTER XVI

## *MUSLIM POLITICS 1921-1935*

IN 1920, on account of the adoption of the non-co-operation programme, Fazl-i-Husain and his Moderate associates left the Muslim League. The League became a mere appendage to the All-India Congress; and it was generally said: "let us decide such and such a matter in the Congress and not wait for the decision of the League, as it is sure to wag its tail."[1] Some of the Provincial Leagues, however, did not adopt the full non-co-operation programme, and being torn with dissensions became weak and unimportant. The activities of the Central Khilafat Committee and its branches all over India, and the adoption of the Khilafat programme by the League, made the League appear superfluous.

In 1924 an agitation was started by the Hindus against separate electorates. In the Punjab the agitation assumed alarming proportions, and it was said to have been aggravated by the policy followed by Fazl-i-Husain with regard to communal representation in services, local bodies and educational institutions. Fazl-i-Husain felt that in order to prevent the Muslims from being overwhelmed by the agitation, and to impress their point of view on the Muddiman Committee which was preparing the ground for the next instalment of Reforms, the All-India Muslim League must be revived and made to recover the distinct identity it had lost during Khilafat agitation. He revived the Punjab Provincial Muslim League, and invited the All-India Muslim League to hold its session at Lahore.

[1] Pir Taj-ud-Din: *The Origin of the Punjab Muslim League.*

The importance of the resolutions passed at this session cannot be over-estimated, because later they were reformulated as Jinnah's Fourteen Points, and indicated the trend of Muslim feelings which continued to inspire them for the next ten years. The session was attended by Khilafatists who came into conflict with Muslims led by Fazl-i-Husain with regard to communal electorates and Muslim representation in Bengal and the Punjab. The session was tumultuous, but with the aid of the large contingent of Punjabi Muslims Fazl-i-Husain was able to hold his own. "If any community in India," he said, "has made any sacrifices of their interests in 1916 at Lucknow it was the Muslim community, and I am glad that I was one of them. But since then the other communities have been systematically demanding more sacrifices from the Muslims; the time has come when they should stop and consider how far they can proceed in that manner. Muslims should stop and consider how far they can proceed in that manner. Muslims should see how far the other communities are ready to sacrifice their interests in the struggle for liberty."[1] The League decided that:

"(a) The existing provinces of India shall all be united under a common Government on a federal basis so that each province shall have full and complete provincial autonomy, the functions of the Central Government being confined to such matters only as are of general and common concern.

"(b) Any territorial redistribution that might at any time become necessary shall not in any way affect the Muslim majority in the Punjab, Bengal and N.W.F.P.

"(c) The mode of representation in the legislature and in all other elected bodies shall guarantee adequate and effective representation to minorities in every province

[1] "The revival of the League," commented the Hindu Press, "after four years at Lahore, under the influence of Mian Fazl-i-Husain, the great anti-Hindu and anti-Sikh Muslim Minister of Punjab, who is responsible for the strong wave of communal feeling of Muslims that is swaying the whole country since Gandhi and the Ali Brothers' Hindu-Muslim unity of 1921, lent colour to a strong suspicion that it was an attempt on the part of the minister further to rally the Muslims against other communities and to wean them from the Congress. The ostensible object of the League was no doubt to prepare the Muslims for the coming constitutional changes which the action of the Congress Party had made inevitable and to safeguard their interests." (*The Indian Quarterly Register*, Volume I, 1924, p. 657.)

subject, however, to the essential provision that no majority shall be reduced to a minority or even to an equality.

"(d) Full religious liberty, i.e. liberty of belief, worship, observance, propaganda, association, and education shall be guaranteed to all communities.

"(e) The idea of joint electorates with a specified number of seats being unacceptable to Indian Muslims on the ground of its being a fruitful source of discord, to achieve the object of effective representation of various communal groups, the representation of the latter shall continue to be by means of separate electorates as at present, provided that it shall be open to any community, at any time to abandon its separate electorates in favour of joint electorates.

"(f) No bill or resolution or any part thereof affecting any community which question is to be determined by the members of that community in the elected body concerned, shall be passed in any legislature or in any other elected body, if ¾th of the members of that community in that particular body oppose such a bill or resolution or part thereof."

During the next two years while the League reiterated the Resolutions it had adopted in 1924, the Hindu Mahasabha swept the polls against the Congress and the communal antagonism deepened. In 1927, in spite of this, Srinivasa Iyengar, President of the Congress, and Mr. Jinnah, President of the League, were anxious to come to a settlement, and held a unity conference at Delhi. Here it was agreed to accept joint electorates on condition that Sind should be separated from Bombay Presidency, that reforms should be introduced in the N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan, and seats should be reserved in all provinces, and in the Punjab and Bengal reservation should be in proportion to population, while in the Central Legislature it should not be less than one-third Muslims. These proposals came to be known as the Delhi Proposals. Fazl-i-Husain was strongly opposed to joint electorates, and under his guidance the Punjab Muslim League denounced the Delhi Proposals. On the other hand, the All-India Muslim League under the leadership of Mr. Jinnah, however, participated

in the All-Parties' Conference which produced the Nehru Report. Although Nehru Report agreed to the separation of Sind and the raising of the N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan to the status of Governor's provinces, it did not concede reservation of seats in the Punjab and Bengal, and insisted on retaining residuary powers with the Central Government and giving Muslims only 25% representation in the Central Legislature. It seemed that "the Nehru Report not only repudiated the Muslim claims, but also the Hindu-Muslim Pact of C. R. Das. It was becoming clear that the power of the electorate was being felt by the leaders. Its communalism became contagious. The Congress became tainted with communalism because it believed in Council entry and had to pander to the prejudices of the electors."[1]

The Congress adopted the Nehru Report and decided to resort to non-violent non-co-operation if it was not accepted by 31st December, 1929. The League split in two sections, one led by Mr. Jinnah, who stood by the Delhi Proposals, and the other by Sir Muhammad Shafi, who opposed them. Sir Muhammad Shafi held a Muslim League session of his own at Lahore, rejected the Delhi Proposals and offered to co-operate with the Simon Commission.[2] At Calcutta, the All-India Muslim disaffiliated the Punjab Muslim League, adopted the Delhi Proposals and accepted the Nehru Report subject to five amendments, which Mr. Jinnah was authorised to get accepted by the Congress; it also emphatically declared non-co-operation with the Simon Commission. While Jinnah's League co-operated with the Congress in boycotting the Simon Commission, all the five amendments asked for were unequivocally rejected by the Congress. The Jinnah League, thus repudiated by the Congress and already alienated from the mass of Muslim public opinion, adjourned *sine die* and began an inglorious phase of its career. Those who felt dissatisfied with Mr. Jinnah's activities at Calcutta rushed to Delhi and convened an All-Parties' Muslim Conference on January 1, 1929, under the presidency of the Aga Khan. The Con-

[1] C. S. Ranga Iyer: *India: Peace or War*, 1930, pp. 136-38.
[2] Muhammad Noman: *Muslim India*, 1942, pp. 264-65.

ference passed a resolution summing up the Muslim demands, but for want of leadership the conference was not followed by any activity on the part of Muslims all over India.

The Independence Resolution of the Congress required a restatement of the Muslim position. Muslims looked around for a leader and hopelessly groped in the dark for a lead. Fazl-i-Husain came to Delhi on April 1, 1930, and at once decided to organize the Muslims and to formulate their demands with the unity and force which characterized the Congress demands. While writing to Sir Mohammad Yakub he said: "What I am very much concerned about is for the Muslims to do something constructive for themselves and for their country. At present they are watching the game more or less between the Hindu politicians on the one hand and the Government on the other. Active Muslim politicians now and then exhort them not to join the Civil Disobedience movement, but after all, this is a negative lead. The present demands something much more constructive, better organization, greater effort, and locally, schemes of development and uplift should be our programme. We must get on otherwise we will be left behind."[1] Indeed, the position of Muslims was precarious. Sir Nazim-ud-Din wrote from Bengal: "You are the only man who can save the Muslims from utter ruination."[2] Sir Akbar Hydari wrote from England: "I am relying on you holding the Home Front while we (Round Table Conference Delegation) are away in London."[3]

Fazl-i-Husain revived the neglected All-India Muslim Conference, and soon made it the most powerful organ of Muslim opinion in India. Such it continued to remain till the Government of India Act of 1935 was passed, and safeguards for Muslims in the new constitution assured. He first consolidated the financial position of the Conference by obtaining, through his personal influence, large sums of money from Hyderabad, and the Aga Khan, and supplemented those funds with smaller contributions from all

[1] Letter dated May 15, 1930.
[2] Letter dated March 26, 1931.
[3] Letter dated July 29, 1931.

over India. He used these funds to subsidize various Muslim organizations, both All-India and Provincial, to carry out the policy of the Conference. He conducted organized propaganda through the Press. Pamphlets were published and widely circulated in political circles both in England and in India. He also set out to create unity and to overcome disruptive tendencies in the ranks of the Conference. He was successful because he did not seek any personal gain, nor was he anxious to obtain office and loom large in the public eye. The Conference gained in importance and the League was soon forgotten for the next five years.

The standpoint of Fazl-i-Husain for the forthcoming Reforms was that the safeguards provided for the Muslims in 1919 should be retained; and as there was going to be some further transfer of power, fuller safeguards should be provided for them. He prepared a comprehensive and detailed programme, which was repeatedly endorsed by the All-India Muslim Conference and advocated by him through his friends and followers throughout the three Round Table Conferences both in India and in England.

The constitutional safeguards for Muslims, he believed, were not anti-national, and there was a sound national basis for Muslim politics in India. It would be harmful to India, he said, if Muslims as a minority were crushed by Hindu nationalism. Ever since Hinduism exterminated Buddhism India had been in the grip of the caste system, religious and social non-co-operation, and denial of the brotherhood of mankind. Islamic contact and rule influenced India for the better and produced some tangible results in upper India. The chief principles of Islam — unity of mankind and their betterment without distinction of caste or colour or creed — revolutionised the Indian mind and forced on it the essential task of self-examination. It is unlikely, he concluded, that the Hindu conscience could have awakened to the claims of the depressed classes or to the crying need to improve the status of women had it not been for Islamic influence reinforced by Western influence during the last 100 years or so. Indian culture in some respects came to be modified such as in matters of dress, language, physique,

caste barriers, etc. and several mediaeval customs were done away with. India still needs Islamic culture and it is a service to India which Indian Muslims should continue to render.[1]

Muslim India, therefore, should not be absorbed into Hindu India, but should be allowed to exist as a separate and independent entity, living peacefully side by side with Hindu India, co-operating and contributing to the development of their motherland, and to the evolution of an Indian culture wherein the most vital elements of Muslim and Hindu culture might be woven together. Nationalism should be fostered through diversity within unity, and not through a unity to be attained by suppression of all diversity. The Muslims were struggling against absorption, and for this they needed constitutional safeguards.

Fazl-i-Husain maintained that hitherto the safeguards for Muslims were separate electorates, weightage, official blocks in the provincial and central legislatures, special powers of the Governor, and no responsibility at the Centre. But now that political advance and further devolution of power were coming, and official blocks would be removed from the provincial and central legislatures, the Muslims would be entirely at the mercy of the Hindus. In the federation, therefore, some units should be areas where Muslims preponderate so that there may be Indian States rather than a Hindu United States. In pressing for these views he made it clear to Government that if his views were disregarded he would consider it his duty to take up the work of Muslim agitation outside the Government. The Viceroy as time passed appreciated the just claims of Muslims, and the Government of India's Despatch on Reforms provided adequate safe-guards for the Muslims and incorporated in it most of the demands of the Muslim Conference.

In order to bring to bear on Government every possible pressure from outside which would reinforce all that he said inside the Executive Council, Fazl-i-Husain organized Muslim public opinion in a thorough manner. To begin with, he consolidated Muslim opinion in the Punjab and

[1] Presidential Address by Fazl-i-Husain to the Second Session of *Idara-i-Maarif-i-Islamia*, 1936.

Bengal. He got most of the Muslim members of the local legislatures and other prominent Muslim public men to issue joint statements. Writing to Sir Sikander Hyat, he said: "I hope you will exert yourself to keep different cliques together. It would be a great pity to let them drift. This is a very critical stage in the development of the community and the country, and a false step taken will relegate the Punjab to the position of a backward province tied to the chariot wheels of Hindu India."[1] In Bengal Sir Nazim-ud-Din helped to solidify Muslim opinion, and brought together various parties. Every effort was made to urge the Working Committee of the Congress to accept the views of the Conference.[2]

He was also anxious to ensure the acceptance of Muslim claims at the Round Table Conference. This was particularly important because the Labour Party had just got into power with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald as Premier, and the Secretary of State for India had announced that separate electorates were against British democratic principles and required re-examination. In India, some Muslims talked of "another annulment of the partition of Bengal." In view of this it was imperative that Muslim representatives to the Round Table Conference should have identical views, although they might belong to different schools of political thought.[3] He accordingly used all his influence and powers of persuasion in the selection of a Muslim Delegation consisting of members in accord with the policy of the All-India Muslim Conference. The problem was to select Muslims who would not only represent his view point but do so effectively, and at the same time have considerable popularity as Muslim leaders in various provinces. Out of the sixteen members of the Muslim Delegation Mr. Jinnah was the only member who was likely to oppose the demands of the Muslim Conference.[4] Fazl-i-Husain, therefore, wrote

[1] Letter dated January 12, 1931.

[2] Letter dated April 12, 1931, to Mian Amir-ud-Din.

[3] Letter dated April 1, 1930, to the Aga Khan.

[4] In 1906 Mr. Jinnah did not join the famous Muslim Deputation, and refused to be a member of the All-India Muslim League till 1913. In 1919 he gave evidence before the Joint Select Committee as a nationalist opposed to Muslim demands. He was a member of the Congress and resigned on the

to Sir Malcolm Hailey to support the nomination of Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan, and while pointing out the necessity of the Muslim Delegation having capable speakers to put forward the Muslim view point ably and forcefully, he said: "Frankly, I do not like the idea of Jinnah doing all the talking and of there being no one strong-minded enough to make a protest in case Jinnah starts upon expressing *his* views when those views are not acceptable to the Indian Muslims. I want someone who would frankly say that it is not the Indian Muslim view. It is a difficult thing to say that and an unpleasant one, and the higher the position of a representative, the more difficult it is for him to say so in a Conference. I believe Shafaat Ahmad and Zafrulla will not hesitate, while Shafi's repudiation may be attributed to rivalry."[1] Dr. Shafaat Ahmad was accordingly nominated. As a representative of the Talukdars, the Maharajah of Mahmudabad was selected but when he failed to go on account of his illness Fazl-i-Husain had him replaced by a confirmed supporter of the Muslim Conference.

At the Second Round Table Conference Government was keen to secure the co-operation of the Congress, and the Viceroy proposed to nominate Dr. Ansari and Sir Ali Imam. As both were staunch supporters of the Nehru Report Fazl-i-Husain protested, and in spite of Lord Irwin's commitments to Gandhi, it was agreed not to nominate Dr. Ansari. Fazl-i-Husain secured the nomination of four new members who were members of the Muslim Conference and this averted all possible dangers to the unity of the Muslim Delegation. The Aga Khan, as its leader, held all the members together and prevented disruptive tendencies

issue of non-co-operation, but did not attack the Congress as a Hindu body and in fact on 3rd October, 1925, he wrote to the *Times of India* publicly repudiating the misleading report that the Congress was a Hindu institution. In the two All-Parties' Conferences, one held in 1925 and the other in 1928, he was prepared to settle the Hindu-Muslim question on the basis of joint electorates. In 1925, speaking in the Legislative Assembly, he said: "I am a nationalist first, a nationalist second and a nationalist last. I once more appeal to this House, whether you are a Muslim or a Hindu, for God's sake do not import the discussion of communal matters into this House and degrade this Assembly which we desire should become a real national Parliament." In 1928, he joined the Congress in the boycott of the Simon Commission and split the League.

[1] Letter dated May 10, 1930.

from growing up among them. Fazl-i-Husain told one of the members: "Whatever lionising may take place of Gandhi in London, you Muslim members of the Delegation, if you played your cards well, would have a pull over all other communities in as much as you have the Aga Khan, who stands pre-eminently in English public life, and no more popular figure, whether English or Indian, exists there. So, if you held together and acted under the Aga Khan's guidance, no harm could possibly come to you."[1] In order to help the Delegation with publicity, Ghulam Rasool Mehr, Editor of *Inqilab*, and Sheikh Abdul Majid, Editor of *The Weekly Unity* were sent to London at the expense of the Muslim Conference.[2] Throughout the three Round Table Conferences Fazl-i-Husain took infinite pains to coach his 'key' men, such as the Aga Khan, Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan, and Dr. Shafaat Ahmad; he gave them detailed instructions and kept them well posted with weekly air mail letters containing 'notes' and 'points'. Similar views were constantly put forward in the India Council before the Secretary of State by Malik Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana.

All this, however, did not mean that he pursued a sectional policy. He realised that the main difficulty was to induce the British Government to part with power,[3] and on this account the Muslims should not appear unduly obstructive. "Why", he asked one of the Muslim delegates, "are communal differences magnified so much in political talks and at the Round Table Conference. The Muslim position should be that there are no communal differences to speak of and that the so called communal differences have been settled on more or less equitable lines."[4] Again, writing to Dr. Shafaat Ahmad he said: "I think the first formula that the Muslim representatives should enunciate is a genuine and keen desire of the Muslims to come to a friendly and brotherly understanding with the Hindus as to the things which the Muslims consider vital for the well-ordered development of nationalism in India, viz. the development

[1] Letter dated July 28, 1931, to Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan.
[2] Letter dated August 30, 1931, from Haji Abdulla Haroon to the Aga Khan.
[3] Letter dated December 1, 1930, to Sir Muhammad Shafi.
[4] Letter dated December 1, 1930, to Sir Zafrulla Khan.

of India as a whole and not of one community at the expense of the other. It should be conceded by the Hindus that an India wherein Muslims continue to go down will create a problem so serious as to jeopardise the future of the country, and, therefore, it is in the interests of the country as a whole that the Muslim community be guaranteed scope for development, and opportunities for contributing to the development of Indian nationalism, to which Muslim culture will make an important and honourable contribution. If this principle is conceded, the rest is a matter of detail. Muslims in the six minority provinces demand nothing more than a bare right to exist; while in the Punjab and Bengal they demand nothing more than a bare majority to show that they have a certain amount of responsibility in shaping the development of these provinces, where they are having an opportunity to make a contribution which will be for the good of the country. When they want the Frontier Province to be a separate province, it is in no sense their desire to lord it over others, but with the sole object of having an opportunity to show what contribution Muslim thought and Muslim culture can make towards the United India of the future. It will be the permeation of this Islamic culture and thought into the rest of India, and the permeation of Hindu culture and thought from the Central Provinces, Bombay and Madras into the other parts of India that the United India of the future will have to emerge as a really and truly united India, and not as a Hindu India or a Muslim India. I do hope discussions will be conducted on a high level with mutual goodwill and trust rather than in a spirit of petty bargaining and the hoodwinking of each other for making each other believe what is known to be only a make-believe."[1]

Nevertheless, both in India and in England, the Mahasabha Hindus maintained a violent agitation in the Press and on the platform against Fazl-i-Husain,[2] and blamed him for sacrificing India to communal considerations. Some extremist Hindus wrote letters threatening to murder him, but he took no notice of those letters and consigned them to the waste paper basket. On one occasion he recorded in his diary:

[1] Letter dated November 6, 1930, to Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan.

[2] Diary—October 9, 1930.

"Danger to me from Hindu Mahasabha in conjunction with the violence party has increased—they have, I understand, decided to do away with me. So far as has been ascertained they propose to attempt this by shooting. The Councillors are being protected by a police guard—four constables and a head constable from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. And what protection can they give? I have always held the view that precautions cannot protect one, though I am not for refusing to have them taken. I do not put much faith in them. No amount of protection can guarantee immunity from such outrages. I believe in *Kismet*, and so the matter ends. I do hope they will not attempt it, because if they do, Hindu-Muslim relations will be very much estranged thereby."[1]

At the first Round Table Conference the Muslims found their position somewhat difficult to maintain. Fazl-i-Husain wrote in his diary: "Labour Government is proposing to abdicate British responsibility in India, i.e. complete Provincial Autonomy, and responsibility at the Centre in all except the Army, Industry and Political Departments and without any settlement of the communal issue as to the constitution of the legislatures. Horrible! the Simon Report and the Government of India Despatch in the waste paper basket. Parliamentary proposals gone to the dogs."[2] This convinced the Hindus that the Labour Party would support the Congress through thick and thin and they, therefore, rejected most of the Muslim demands. Certain Muslims, who were already advocating joint electorates,[3] agreed to explore conditions under which joint electorates could be acceptable, and held an informal conference with Sardar Sampuran Singh, Sardar Ujjal Singh and Dr. Moonje to thrash out a formula. Fazl-i-Husain received the news of

[1] Diary—October 15, 1930.

[2] Diary—November 15, 1930.

[3] "News from Round Table Conference indicates that Labour Government made attempts to make Muslims agree to some sort of joint electorates. Shafi, Bhopal, Sultan Ahmad, Fazl-ul-Haq, Hidayatullah were ready for the game, but others were against it. Muhammad Ali was also helping and no doubt Jinnah too, though himself remaining in the background. I had to take strong action and the situation has just been saved. We must keep our present weightage in six provinces and Centre and separate electorates and have majority in Bengal and the Punjab through separate electorates. Let Hindus non-co-operate and let us build up sufficient strength during the next ten years." (Diary—December 3, 1930.)

these developments with misgivings, and recorded in his diary: "The Muslim position at the Round Table Conference is deteriorating and I must do something to put it right. I cannot let my life's work be spoilt. I must think hard and then plan out a course of action which will answer the purpose."[1] He at once wrote to Sir Muhammad Shafi to say: "There is no question of nationalism, but only of dominating over Muslims by the India Government of the future. No one is ready to sacrifice the Muslim community and its culture and its future to hasten the bringing of the end."[2] He blamed the Muslim delegates for saying "Amen to all general platitudes about advance and obtaining full responsible Government and Dominion Status and so on, in order to loom large in the English public press and in their own minds, and in trying to establish their own reputation for patriotism, for being non-communal and for being obliging to the Labour Government."[3] Referring to the delegates who were now prepared to accept joint electorates, but had been sent to the Round Table Conference as representatives of the All-India Muslim Conference, he said: "I have respect for those who in order to attain national unity in India believe that by sacrificing Muslims it can be attained and the end will justify the means; but I can have no respect for those who do not believe in this, and yet, for unworthy reasons, may be prepared to pretend that this course will not injure their community or their country. Now, what is it that the Labour Government offer? We give you responsibility at the Centre if you settle your communal disputes. Now, who will benefit more by responsibility being introduced at the Centre at this stage, Hindus or Muslims? Undoubtedly, the Hindus, therefore, who should be anxious to settle communal differences in order to secure the promised gain? Naturally, the Hindus. Then why should Muslims, who are politically, educationally and economically weaker in the country pretend that by ousting the British power from India and by introducing responsibility they stand to gain

[1] Diary—December 21, 1930.
[2] Letter dated January 5, 1931, to Sir Muhammad Shafi.
[3] Letter dated December 20, 1930, to Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan.

so much that, for it, they are prepared to sacrifice communal interests. The position has only to be visualized in a fair, judicial and commonsense way to notice the absurdity of it. The only explanation people have given of the attitude of some of the Muslim members of the Indian Delegation is corruption. The Turkish Nation was ruined over and over again by their Pashas. Is the Indian Muslim community going to be ruined by the Muslim delegates to the Round Table Conference?"[1]

After these admonitions he agitated the matter in the Muslim Press, which at once and strongly condemned the joint electorate parleys in England. Several Muslim organizations sent telegrams to various members of the Delegation and the Prime Minister refusing to be bound by these 'talks'. The Aga Khan, as leader of the Delegation, repudiated the offers made by Mr. Jinnah and Sir Muhammad Shafi, while other members made statements in the Press dissociating themselves from the proposals. Fazl-i-Husain also approached the Secretary of State through the Viceroy and told him that since the Muslims had refused to accept the Nehru Report and had, therefore, kept away from Civil Disobedience, it was unfair on the part of Government now to force Muslims to accept what the Nehru Report had already offered to them. The British Government was going against the recommendations of Local Governments, the Simon Commission and the Government of India. He boldly stated that if separate electorates were taken away, weightage for Muslims in minority provinces done away with, and the Punjab and Bengal denied a bare majority, "I and with me a large number of Muslims will feel called upon to try our luck in the political reconstruction of India through the Congress rather than submit to gradual obliteration through the proposed reformed constitution." Muslims, he maintained, only wish for political advance if their rights, vital interests and demands are conceded first, and if Government pushes them to accept a position which the Congress

[1] Letter dated December 22, 1930, to Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan.

offers them, then they stand to gain by joining the Congress and intensifying the struggle against Government.[1] As a result of this intervention the joint electorate proposals failed and the first Round Table Conference ended with the declaration that there would be a federation but no decision about the communal question was arrived at. Fazl-i-Husain with some satisfaction recorded in his diary: "Round Table Conference matters seem to be now getting into the normal channels and the danger from general principles is reduced. I believe the Muslims are now getting hold of their moorings — the Government of India Despatch. Any advance over that means improving the Muslim position communally, so that by the time we reach full self-Government, we are guaranteed against flagrant oppression."[2]

In this controversy the position of the Congress Muslims was a difficult one. The proposals put forward by the All-India Muslim Nationalist Conference and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, except for joint electorates and weightage to Muslims in minority provinces, were the same as the demands made by the All-India Muslim Conference. The weakness of their position was that they presupposed adult franchise

[1] Diary—December 30, 1930.

[2] Diary—December 24, 1930. This caused Fazl-i-Husain to be criticized as a reactionary. F. W. Wilson, writing in *The Indian Chaos* said: "Sir Fazl-i-Husain had a very clear understanding with Civil Service elements in the Government of India. It was generally supposed that this understanding comprised support of the Civil Service point of view, in return for a support of Muslim claims.... Sir Fazli's plan has the merit and advantage of simplicity. He does not wish to see any reforms until he has so organized his community that they will be strong enough to insist upon their own terms. His undoubted alliance with the Civil Service elements in Government, originally begun at Lahore, meant necessarily the submission of the nationalist Muslims, a stiffening of the Muslim demands, and the emergence of a plan of campaign, at the last Round Table Conference, which with its threat to the successful issue of these proceedings must have gladdened the hearts of the die-hard elements at Delhi." It is a fact that Fazl-i-Husain felt so strongly about safe-guards for Muslims that in their absence he was even prepared to postpone reforms, but this policy was adopted neither for "support of the Civil Service point of view," nor did it deter him, as is evident from his views about the reforms, from pressing for the greatest measure of political advance. Civil Service elements may have found his insistence on Muslim rights helpful to them in opposing the Congress, but that was not because he was a reactionary; it happened because the Congress would not readily concede the legitimate rights of Muslims. At no stage was there any "stiffening of the Muslim demands" to make a compromise with the Congress difficult; the demands announced on 1st January, 1929, were adhered to throughout and all that Fazl-i-Husain did was to prevent any diminution to the detriment of Muslims.

which was obviously for the time being impracticable. What was more, even these proposals were never adopted by the Congress and the Hindu Press received them badly. On the other hand, after the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, Gandhi met some representatives of the All-India Muslim Conference, but he refused to accept their demands unless they were supported by the Congress Muslims. He was bound, he said, not to listen to any community of which even a single member was in the Congress. He expressed willingness to surrender completely if the Muslims reached complete unanimity among themselves, the same attitude for which the Congress blamed the British Government. It was but natural that under these circumstances a settlement should be difficult.

Eventually, Shaukat Ali asked Gandhi to approach the Muslims through Bhopal, and a meeting was fixed at Bhopal, at which Shaukat Ali, Sir Muhammad Shafi, Maulana Shafee Daudee and Dr. Iqbal, as representatives of the Muslim Conference, and Sherwani, Dr. Ansari and Chaudhri Khaliquzzaman, as representatives of the Congress Muslims, were present. When Fazl-i-Husain heard of this he at once wrote to Maulana Shafi Daudee: "It is understood that there are intrigues within intrigues going on. As I always said the Muslim cause in the past has never been lost through soldiers but through generals who acted dishonestly. I trust history will not repeat itself in the case of Indian Muslims."[1] On return from Bhopal Dr. Iqbal put forward two proposals which Fazl-i-Husain refused to accept and the latter wrote to him: "Your first proposal reads as follows:—

> Joint electorates to be introduced at the end of ten years with adult suffrage, provided that if the majority of Muslim members of any legislature, Federal or Provincial, agree to accept joint electorates at any time before the expiry of ten years, separate electorates will be abolished *qua* such legislature.

The criticism of this proposal is: (i) It makes the introduction of joint electorates obligatory on the expiry of ten

[1] Letter dated May 5, 1931.

years, even though the experience gained during the ten years may be such as to necessitate the continuation of separate electorates.

(ii) It also renders obligatory the introduction of adult suffrage which again may be considered, in the light of the experience gained, impracticable.

(iii) It at once recognises that joint electorates have to be introduced and their introduction is being postponed only for ten years. This gives away the Muslim position altogether.

(iv) It renders the introduction of joint electorates in the second election permissible by bare majority of Muslim members. This is contrary to the position that separate electorates have been guaranteed to the Muslims by Government and can be given up only by the Muslims themselves.

(v) From a practical point of view this position will be taken up as if the condition of adult suffrage did not exist, because it is common knowledge that the present stage is too early for it and, therefore, the proposal amounts to this that Muslims accept joint electorates but want to be given ten years' time as a favour during which they reconcile themselves to joint electorates.

(vi) The proposal is practically the same as in the Nehru Report.

(vii) Muslim India will not accept the proposal.

"Your second proposal which is an alternative to the first is as follows:—

> First election under the new constitution to be on the basis of separate electorates and a referendum on the question of joint versus separate electorates at the begining of the fifth year of the first legislature.

The meaning of this proposal is not quite clear. What does a referendum mean? Referendum of whom, of the electorate or of a particular class of people? Who is to conduct the referendum? Or does it mean that the second election under the new Constitution should be contested on the issue whether the Muslims want joint or separate

electorates? Or again does it mean that the question is for settlement by all constituencies, whether Muslim or non-Muslim? The only position which Muslims can take up is that the first election under the new Constitution be held on the basis of separate electorates and that it should be open to Muslim members of any legislature to pass a resolution by a particular majority that the next election shall be held through joint electorates and that in future that shall be acted upon."[1] As a result of Fazl-i-Husain's firm determination not to allow the Muslim Conference to reduce its demands the negotiations with Nationalist Muslims failed.[2]

Before going to attend the second Round Table Conference Gandhi issued a statement on the communal question, but it failed to satisfy Muslims; the All-India Muslim Conference rejected it and Gandhi had to proceed to London without solving the communal question. This lost him his full representative position, and his participation in the Conference was unfruitful. The failure of the first Round Table Conference to settle the communal question was repeated. Gandhi, contrary to the policy of the Congress from 1917-27, opposed separate electorates and instead of narrowing down points of difference widened the gulf. The Minorities Committee broke down and the Prime Minister had to announce that in the absence of a mutual settlement of Hindus and Muslims Government would enforce a provisional scheme.

[1] Letter dated May 15, 1931.

[2] Fazl-i-Husain has been strongly criticized for this. For example, it has been said: "A most shameful conspiracy to undermine the Congress, and the political advancement of India was hatched by the English bureaucrats with the help of some Indian Princes and some Muslim reactionaries, including Sir Fazl-i-Husain, an ex-Congressman, who had left the Congress 'for a handful of silver and a ribbon to stick to his coat.' He held his place in the official circles simply because of his anti-national views....At the eleventh hour Sir Fazl-i-Husain, then a member of the Viceroy's Council openly stepped in and wrecked the pourparlers which had been going on first at Bhopal, and finally at Simla in May 1931. He was actively assisted by the tripartite conspirators, namely, the suborned Muslims, reactionary bureaucrats and some Princes." (Kailash Chandra: *Tragedy of Jinnah*, 1941, pp. 85-66). The fact is that the Princes and "reactionary bureaucrats" did not come into this; all that Fazl-i-Husain did was to urge the Muslims not to depart from the demands of the Muslim Conference.

Fazl-i-Husain's opposition to the Congress on the question of safeguards for the Muslims, however, did not mean that he otherwise lent himself to purely communal movements among Muslims. He was not a slave to popular communal enthusiasm and refused to be carried away by transitory movements. In opposing the Hijrat and the Khilafat movements he did not hesitate to give the Punjab Muslims a lead at the expense of his popularity and leadership. Similarly, when in connection with the Hedjaz Pilgrims' Bill of 1933 there was a talk of revival of Pan-Islamism to enforce Muslim demands, he boldly said in the Council of State: "Sir, Pan-Islamism of which Young Muslim India dreamt years ago was never more than a myth, and today there are not even the ashes left of that myth. Therefore, those Honourable Members who imagine that there is a bogey of Pan-Islamism of which Europe is frightened, I am afraid are suffering from some hallucination or delusion. I assure the House, (though I do not think the House needs any assurance), that if a few members are still dreaming of Pan-Islamism I say they had better make up their minds to stand on their own legs, in India as Indians. (Hear! hear!)"[1] He stood for common nationhood based on mutual co-operation to achieve which Muslims must be brought in line with the Hindus who had stolen a march over them. Further, Muslims should not fritter away their energy in pursuit of the unattainable, or of what did not concern their welfare directly. While recognizing the force of popular movements (i.e. Hijrat, Khilafat, Pan-Islamism, Palestine) as a means of unifying Muslims within India, he regarded them as intrinsically pointless. He tried to induce Government to adopt policies which would prevent the development of such movements. For example, in the matter of Palestine he pointed out the justness of Arab grievances, and added that any further prosecution of the scheme of establishing a Jewish National Home in Palestine was bound to be resented throughout the Muslim world.

[1] Proceedings of the Council of State, September 19, 1933.

After protracted delays the British Government announced the Communal Award in 1932. This was confined to the composition of provincial legislatures. Separate communal electorates were conceded, and the existing weightage enjoyed by Muslims in the U.P., Bihar, Orissa and Madras was maintained with slight modifications. While the Punjab Muslims got 51% representation in the legislature, the Bengal Muslims got only 48.4%. Weightage was given to non-Muslim minorities in the N.W.F.P. equivalent to three times their population, which was far in excess of what the Muslims got in the minority provinces. On the whole, except for Bengal, the Award was satisfactory from the Muslim view point, and was according to the wishes of Fazl-i-Husain. The Award was soon followed by the separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency.[1]

Soon the question arose of how to retain what the Muslims had secured under the Award. After the announcement the Muslims relapsed into political inactivity; the Muslim mind was at the time unoccupied, lethargic, suspicious and dissatisfied with its leaders, who were busy with factional jealousies and did not care to push forward any cause, whether communal or national. This was dangerous because the Hindus had started a wide campaign against the Award. This campaign began with the Allahabad Unity Conference which asked for the alteration of the Communal Award by substituting joint for separate electorates and reducing Muslim representation in the Punjab in order to increase Sikh representation.[2] Fazl-i-Husain held a joint meeting at Delhi of various Muslim organizations including

[1] M. A. Khuro (M.L.C.), leader of those demanding reforms for Sind, wrote to Fazl-i-Husain on December 28, 1932: "The Muslims of Sind are conscious of the fact that you have contributed to a very large extent towards their success in this matter, and I take this opportunity to thank you most warmly on their behalf."

[2] In a letter dated August 20, 1931, Fazl-i-Husain wrote to Seth Haji Abdullah Haroon: "The short-sightedness of a certain section of Hindus has done India a great deal of harm because they have propounded the idea that a minority should have the right to dictate to the majority what to do and what not to do. This means lack of confidence and trust, and in its absence, democratic reforms cannot work. Hence the inevitable safeguards with which the Governors have been invested. I am sure the future historian will hold a certain section of the Sind Hindus and a certain section of Hindus and Sikhs in the Punjab responsible for this great disservice to the cause of their country's advance."

the All-India Muslim Conference, All-India Muslim League, and Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind (Cawnpore). The meeting rejected the Allahabad proposals as unacceptable to Muslims. In the provinces the Muslims now woke up from somnolence and for every meeting held by the Hindu Mahasabha asking for joint electorates a meeting was held by the local branch of the Muslim Conference to approve of the Award. Thus the virulent propaganda of the Mahasabha conducted through anti-Communal Award Conferences all over India was effectively counteracted.

After the third Round Table Conference the stages of the Consultative Committee, the White Paper and the Joint Select Committee were still ahead. The Diehard elements in England were out to emphasise communal differences and were anxious that the Muslims should reject the Communal Award and thereby enable Government to reopen the whole question and encourage communal discord still further. The Mahasabha was also anxious to unsettle the Award, so that the danger of Muslims losing ground was very great. It was necessary to recreate and maintain the unity in the Muslim ranks which had existed before the Communal Award. Within the Muslim Conference there was some friction on account of a party being opposed to the existing office holders. Fazl-i-Husain composed their differences. Cordial relations were also established with the All-India Muslim League, and in conjunction with the League it was decided to form a Parliamentary Majlis with a view to contesting elections to the Central Assembly. In order to fortify Muslim solidarity a successful meeting of the Muslim Conference was held in February 1934.

The task of restoring unity within the All-India Muslim League was more difficult. The Jinnah and Shafi groups were the main parties. Fazl-i-Husain closed the ranks of the League by putting up for Presidentship a man who could not be opposed by a lesser man like Mian Abdul Aziz, President representing the Shafi group. He secured the acceptance of Mr. Jinnah as President, both sections met, the gap was bridged, and the League passed resolutions similar to those of the Muslim Conference. The following

year the League and the Conference met again and passed the same resolutions. Fazl-i-Husain wrote to Mr. Jinnah approving of the resolutions, to which Mr. Jinnah replied: "I am glad that you approve of the resolutions passed by the All-India Muslim League. It is a great comfort to me that I have the approval of a man whose judgment I value."[1] Henceforth, the Muslim Conference and the Muslim League worked together in close collaboration to uphold the Communal Award.

As a result of these efforts of Fazl-i-Husain, the Muslim League was stronger than ever before; the Bengal Presidency Muslim League, which had seceded, returned to the fold and passed a resolution in favour of the Award; the Congress Muslims were never so weak as they were now. Thus Fazl-i-Husain proved that Muslim India was united in supporting the Command Award. Malviya and some others exhibited lack of insight into political affairs by their agitation for the modification of the Award.

Fazl-i-Husain eventually won from the Congress a recognition of Muslim claims. The Congress Election Manifesto, issued in 1934, said: "It (the Award) is anti-national, but the Congress cannot refuse to take into account the attitude of the Musalmans in general who seem to want the Award, nor can the Congress accept it, as the Hindus and the Sikhs reject it." Thus the Congress admitted that the communal problem had to be solved before the solution of the constitutional tangle; that the principle of geographical electorates cannot be forced upon the Muslims; and that separate electorates may be adopted for the proposed Constituent Assembly. Individual Congressmen went beyond this neutral attitude. Babu Rajendra Prasad said that the present constitution was based upon the Lucknow Pact which had not been rescinded by the Congress, and that no programme could be made in the country without the acceptance of the Award. C. Rajagopalachari declared: "We cannot force joint electorates on Muslims if they as a community finally and definitely refuse at present to accept that method of recording their vote." Jawahar Lal Nehru

[1] Letter dated May 11, 1934.

said that Legislatures elected on the basis of adult franchise by separate electorates would be truly rpresentative of the Muslim community, and any decision arrived at by a majority will be treated as a decision of the Muslim community, and that he would be prepared to accept it as such. He added that everything should be done to remove the fears and suspicions of the Muslims. So much having been conceded by the Congress, the way for co-operation with the Congress in working the Reforms was prepared.

The Muslim position under the new constitution was adequately safe-guarded, and the demands first put forward in the Delhi Resolution (1929) were to a large extent secured. The N.W.F.P. became a Governor's Province. Sind was separated from Bombay and declared to be a Governor's Province. The Muslim share in the public services was fixed at 25% of all Imperial appointments. With regard to residuary powers, it is true that the Muslim demand that they should be vested in the provinces was not accepted, but as desired by Muslims they were not vested in the Centre, but were to be exercised by the Governor-General in his discretion The demand for 33½% representation in the Cabinet, Central and Provincial, was not met in the Act, but provision for giving effect to it was made in the Instrument of Instructions issued to the Governor-General and the Governors. Muslims were to be represented by separate electorates without prejudice to the weightages obtained by the Muslim minorities under the Lucknow Pact; Muslims in the Punjab were given a statutory majority. The only demand in this respect which was not conceded was in the case of Bengal, because of the necessity for providing representation for Europeans. The principle of religious liberty was accepted and an assurance was given that the culture of the minorities would not be interfered with. All this put the Muslim mind at rest, and it also concluded the labours of Fazl-i-Husain for five years in the Government of India.

## CHAPTER XVII

### *THE PUNJAB: 1930-1935*

FAZL-I-HUSAIN was away from the Punjab for five years, but whilst at Delhi he kept himself in constant touch with his province, and at critical moments did not fail to give directions and purposes to its political development in several ways. He had devoted his entire public life of over twenty-five years to his province and could not cease to think of it and ponder over its future even when he was away from it. When he was appointed member of the Viceroy's Executive Council he was indeed loath to leave the Punjab, and said: "I have been since my appointment, which is going to take me away from the province, not feeling quite happy about it. All along I have been feeling that it is a separation which is not of my seeking and I would rather serve here than elsewhere. And yet the only thing which has stood in the way of my staying here with you has been a sense of duty that has compelled me not to refuse the performance of a duty which I have been called upon to discharge."[1]

He was anxious that the Punjab should remain free from the Civil Disobedience movement, just as it had been free to a large extent from the Non-Co-operation movement. Whenever, therefore, the administration acted in any manner which was likely to stimulate the movement, he advised Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency, the Governor, to the contrary, and Sir Geoffrey, who valued his advice, invariably acted on it. When in certain places women *Jathas* were harassed by prostitutes and *goondas*, Fazl-i-Husain advised that it should be stopped, as it would not prevent women

[1] Speech delivered at a farewell party.

from going into *Jathas*, and at the same time cause bitterness and resentment among people which would add to the feeling in favour of the movement.[1] On one occasion Fazl-i-Husain wrote: "Gujranwala seems to be developing into a civil disobedience centre of activity. I believe the movement is for the present confined to the Gujranwala town. Don't you think it would be worth while mobilizing the rural forces to make a good counter demonstration in opposition to the civil disobedience movement?"[2]

The Peshawar Disturbances raised a storm of protest in the Punjab and it seemed probable that Khilafatists might successfully use the happenings in the Frontier Province to win over Muslim opinion in the Punjab. Fazl-i-Husain asked his friends to get into touch with and influence the more moderate Khilafatists with the result that the Punjab Muslims remained unaffected by the extremist tendencies of their co-religionists in the neighbouring province.[3] Rural areas had hitherto remained unaffected and when the Congress made some efforts to reach the masses Fazl-i-Husain counteracted its activities by strengthening the Punjab Provincial Zamindara League. This was financed and provided with able guidance. When Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency was fired at and wounded at the Punjab University Convocation, Fazl-i-Husain seized the opportunity and asked his friends to make a strong demonstration against terrorism as a political weapon.[4]

These few illustrations indicate how vigilantly he watched developments in the Punjab and helped to keep Civil Disobedience and terrorism at bay. Prima facie this policy suggests the bolstering up of the bureaucracy with the help of the rural population against the national movement. But the fact is that while Fazl-i-Husain had no sympathy with the bureaucracy, and fully understood its policy and its intentions (which he never hesitated to criticize), and was in no sense opposed to the national movement, he wanted successfully to counter Civil Disobedience and terrorism,

[1] Letter dated June 1, 1930, to Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency.
[2] Letter dated July 9, 1930, to Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency.
[3] Letter dated April 26, 1930, to Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency.
[4] Letter dated December 26, 1930, to Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan.

both of which he disapproved of. As it happened the rural population of the Punjab, unlike the rural population in some other parts of India, was largely unaffected by both these movements and Fazl-i-Husain relied on it for support. That his object and that of the bureacracy was the same in this respect was a matter of coincidence. Besides, it must be remembered that when the major political party in the country is all the time non-co-operating, for a person with administrative responsibilities, even though believing in the ideals of that party, it is not possible to consistently pursue policies which would not at some stage or other go against the activities of that party.

Fazl-i-Husain was anxious that the Unionist Party should not weaken, and that the party system of Government should develop in the Punjab. In 1926 Sir Malcolm Hailey had formed a non-party communal ministery, but it was hoped that Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency, the new Governor, would act constitutionally and form a non-communal party ministry. The Unionist Party became weak during Sir Malcolm Hailey's regime and almost split as soon as Fazl-i-Husain left the Punjab. There was at the time no other outstanding Muslim leader who could place party interests above his personal interests. The outgoing Ministry consisted of Firoz Khan Noon (Unionist), Jogendra Singh (non-party) and Manohar Lal (Mahasabha). Fazl-i-Husain wanted the Muslim minister's charge to include Education Department, and Firoz Khan Noon to remain the Muslim nominee of the Unionist Party. It was also his wish that the ministry should be constituted entirely from the Unionist Party, and that the other Ministers should be Chhotu Ram and Harbakhsh Singh, failing which the Party should oppose the non-Muslim part of the ministry.[1] Some Muslim leaders, however, ruined the chances of a purely Unionist Ministry. Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din (President of the Council), supported by Ahmadyar Khan Daultana, wanted to become a minister, or at least to prevent Firoz Khan Noon from becoming a minister again. It was hoped by this means to destroy the influence and prestige of the

[1] Letter dated September 27, 1930, to Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan.

Maliks of Shahpur district. Besides, there was considerable discontent among urban Muslims against Firoz Khan Noon who during the elections had helped some of his rural friends against urban Muslims. As Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din had not many chances of becoming a minister he asked Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan to offer himself for the Ministry,[1] but Fazl-i-Husain at once wrote to Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan advising him to the contrary: "The view I take of the matter is this: A capable Punjabi Muslim is needed badly in the High Court. Responsible authorities have repeatedly expressed the view that this need should be met, and, as you are aware, you have been believed to be the man to meet this need. The appointment will be a permanent one, and a long one.[2] He also asked Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan and Firoz Khan Noon to have a frank talk with each other. To Sir Sikander Hyat he wrote: "The first question naturally is, does Zafrulla offer himself for ministership? If he does not, then this attempt at creating a split in the Party should be definitely suppressed. If, on the other hand, he offers himself, then the right course to adopt is for him as well as for Firoz to submit themselves to the vote of their Party, and if a substantial majority of the Party support one or the other, their opinion should be accepted by both and the matter not allowed to go any further."[3] Fazl-i-Husain was anxious to avoid rivalry for leadership between two members of the Party. He wrote to Firoz Khan: "In the matter of ministership, so far as I can see, the number of your supporters from among the Muslim members of the Party is at least double the number of those likely to support Zafrulla Khan. Therefore, I strongly advise you not to make the mistake of forming alliances with Hindus or Sikhs with the object of strengthening your position. This is likely to react unfavourably on you and not to be helpful."[4]

While Firoz Khan Noon was away at his village in Shahpur district intrigues continued in Lahore. Certain leading

[1] Diary—October 2, 1930.
[2] Letter dated September 2, 1930.
[3] Letter dated October 2, 1930.
[4] Letter dated October 2, 1930.

urban Muslims formed themselves into a deputation and saw the Governor and asked for the appointment of one of themselves as a minister.[1] Most of them, however, felt that Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan was the only one among them who, on grounds of merit, had the greatest chances of success against Firoz Khan Noon. Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan told them that he was unwilling to offer himself for ministership, but if they convinced him that there was strong support behind him, he might do so. Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din and Ahmadyar Khan Daultana tried to secure signatures of members promising to support him.[2] On hearing of this Fazl-i-Husain wrote to Sir Sikander Hyat: "This is very much to be regretted in as much as if some members canvass support for one candidate, others must canvass support for the other candidate, and both sides will decry each other's candidates. This does harm to both, and, in the case of Zafrulla, will revive what some people had urged against him as not being acceptable to Muslims on account of his being an Ahmadi. I did my best to counteract that view, but it is the all popular view. What is more important is that this will not leave any very strong candidate for the High Court. We want at least two good and young men for the High Court, and Zafrulla is bound to be one of them. I have had in mind Din Muhammad as a candidate to be pushed for this. You should try to prevent this scramble for office degenerating into a squabble. Zafrulla is a sensible man, and if His Excellency wants to appoint him, there is no need for canvassing; and if he would rather not appoint him, then canvassing will not help. If Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din is interesting himself in him, then it is very likely that he is more keen on establishing the mistakes made by Sir Malcolm Hailey in appointing Firoz as minister, and by Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency in appointing you in preference to him; but he cannot establish this by supporting Zafrullah."[3]

[1] "Things in Lahore are made lively by Shahab-ud-Din's intrigues and he is coming out in his true colours. My influence for good on people does not appear to be of any lasting nature. But where has it been in the history of the world?" (Diary—October 4, 1930.)

[2] Diary—October 7, 1930.

[3] Letter dated October 3, 1930.

As the contest proceeded apace, Fazl-i-Husain observed in his diary: "Punjab affairs are all topsy-turvy. Some people have been too selfish and personal. Had letters and talks with Firoz and Sikander, and letters from Shahab-ud-Din. I think Shahab-ud-Din has behaved badly and Mehr Shah has done great mischief. Curiously, the two men who got ten squares each only last March. The effect of this on the Party and on the Sikh and Hindu members is extremely bad. This is the first serious blow on my work in the Punjab due to my leaving the Punjab. I had better wait till I am in Lahore to see what can be done to put matters right."[1] Some time latter he recorded: "The Punjab Muslims are today weaker than ever before. Firoz on one side, Shahab-ud-Din supported in part by Ahmadyar on the other side, and Sikander supported by Ahmadyar on the third. Shahab-ud-Din is at war with both Firoz and Sikander, but more with Firoz than with Sikander. Sikander has neither the power nor the inclination to produce unanimity and is not likely to sink his personal advancement. He is on the whole better than Firoz and Shahab-ud-Din;[2] by 'better', I mean less open to criticism because his overt acts are not as outrageous as of the other two."[3] Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan, who was leaving for to England as a member of the Round Table Conference, definitely told the Governor that he was not a candidate for ministership, but the controversy gave sufficient excuse to the Governor to repeat the experiment of a non-party communal Ministry; and he appointed, in addition to Sir Sikander Hyat, who was Revenue Member, Sir Gokal Chand Narang, Malik Firoz Khan Noon and Sir Jogendra Singh as ministers.[4]

[1] Diary—October 10, 1930.

[2] "Shahab-ud-Din had a long talk with me. He realizes that he made a mess of it and is ashamed of himself. I did not worry him for what is the use of condemning a man when his conscience is condemning him." (Diary—October 29, 1930.)

[3] Diary—May 8, 1932.

[4] "News from Lahore hopeful. Firoz will be reappointed and this is highly satisfactory. Manohar Lal will be ousted by Gokal Chand but really Chhotu Ram should have been appointed. Governor is caring more for peace than principle—the policy was initiated by Hailey and retarded the development of parties in the province." (Diary—October 14, 1930.)

Fazl-i-Husain was disappointed and wrote to Chhotu Ram:[1] "This personal squabble has hurt me more than anything else for many years. This shameful exhibition of spite and malice would not be worth noticing but for its most damaging effect in the best interests of the Party. United, the Party could demand its rights; divided, it becomes a laughing stock for all. I am in entire agreement with you that the least the Party was entitled to was to have two ministers from it. My personal views on the subjects are, as you know, quite strong. I would prefer a ministry of two, both ministers being non-Muslims, as long as they belonged to the Unionist Party which is the majority party. The Muslim minister came in only because of the possibility of a third minister not belonging to the Party. The position of the Party being reduced to have but one-third share, and that of a communal nature, is intolerable and one which the Party, if united, could have violently protested against."[2] He also wrote to Harbaksh Singh in the same strain: "It hurt me very much indeed to see personal squabbles doing such immense harm to the Party and the cause. It was quite immaterial as to who became minister; either A or B or C. What the Party could have stood for was that there should be two ministers from the Party, a Muslim and a non-Muslim, the choice of the men being left entirely to the Governor. If during the existing transitional stage the ministry could not be entirely from the majority party it should, at all events, be largely so. It has been my great ambition and in fact, my only ambition in life to see established in the Punjab a school of thought which proceeds on principles, vital principles, and not on creeds, and I had aspired to bring together men, Hindus, Muhammadans, Sikhs, Christians, all subscribing to one political creed wherein, whenever there was an office of responsibility and trust the preponderating

[1] "Chhotu Ram and Harbakhsh Singh are very hurt in view of the squabble between Firoz and Shahab-ud-Din. This is perfectly true. Had the party kept its ranks closed they could have insisted on another minister being taken from the Party. The responsibility for this lies on Ahmadyar and Shahab-ud-Din and to a certain extent on Zafrulla Khan and Mehr Shah." (Diary—October 20, 1930.)

[2] Letter dated October 13, 1930.

majority of Muslims would show their confidence and faith in their non-Muslim colleagues by putting their principles before themselves. Personally, I would have preferred a ministry of two only, and both non-Muslims, provided it came from the Party."[1]

The effect of the weakening of the Unionist Party and the formation of a communal ministry was disastrous to the province. The prestige of the ministry was lowered and the Governor became stronger than he ever was before. Sir Gokal Chand Narang, the Mahasabha minister, placed two measures on the Statute Book which crippled local self-government in the Punjab: the Municipal Executive Officers Act, 1931, which deprived the elected representatives of the people from exercising executive power, and the Punjab Municipal (Amendment) Act, 1932, which increased Government control over municipalities through Government officials and the Local Self-Government Board. Under the leadership of Sir Chhotu Ram and Malik Din Muhammad, the Unionists opposed both Bills tooth and nail, and held a walk out in the Council on the ground that the Bills took away the powers given to the people under the Reforms and invested the executive with autocratic power to override local bodies. Sir Gokal Chand Narang, however, carried the Bills with the support of urban Hindus and the official bloc. Apart from retrogression in local self government, there was an appalling decline in the progress of education; and by 1935 the Punjab, which in 1926 had been the third best province in India, became educationally one of the most backward. The bureaucracy now resumed powers it had shed during the first ten years of the Reforms, and became intolerant of public opinion. Favouritism and nepotism corrupted the administration; the standard of efficiency declined. Towards the close of 1934, Fazl-i-Husain wrote to Sir Sikander: "Frankly, I do not feel too hopeful about the future. Somehow, it seems that the atmosphere has deteriorated. It is nobody's fault, I am sure; but facts are facts. In the case of officials one is inclined to think that those of past were giants, and those that are now only human beings, and those

[1] Letter dated October 13, 1930.

of the future are likely to be pygmies. . . . However, the trend of events, the general atmosphere, the attitude of mind, official and non-official, the material available, so far as one can judge at present, are none too encouraging for one who has worked, seen workers, and feels none too strong to mould circumstances and events to suit the discharge of his duties."[1] The worst development of all was an increase in communal antagonism, of which the Shahidgunj agitation was the most alarming outburst. In view of these developments it was but natural that Fazl-i-Husain should wish, on the conclusion of his term of office with the Government of India, to return to the Punjab and once again be at the helm of affairs.

When Fazl-i-Husain returned to the Punjab he found provincial leadership in a deplorable state. Writing about it in his diary he observed: "Government policy is responsible for there being no leader in any community. As soon as Government officials find an Indian wielding influence, their tendency is to counteract his influence. This has come to be Government policy. In the case of Hindus, the excuse was that they are Congresswallas, and so opposed to Government. In the case of Muslims, when there is no excuse, resort is had to underhand propaganda so as to prevent the community from developing strength which unity brings. Sectarianism is encouraged. Personal factions created, encouraged and developed, and when they do not help recourse is taken to encouraging the leaders of the scum of society to create diversions by undermining the influence of leaders. And what is the result? Government has freedom of action—can do what it likes, but if things do not work out as desired by them, there is no one to help them. Members and ministers cannot be really useful if their position is no better than that of glorified Tahsildars to do the bidding of the Governor. What following, what party, what school of thought? Gandhi achieved great influence, but it was religious, based on the whole policy being anti-British. Government set itself to the task of undermining his influence and today (1935) Gandhi possesses but little

[1] Letter dated November 8, 1934.

A page from the 'Diary' (1932-36).

18 July 35 - Thursday

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political influence. This policy is inevitable if the administration is autocratic or bureaucratic, and that is why Provincial Autonomy cannot be a success—autocracy of the Governor against the ministry. As a rule no ministry will function but if there is a case in which it functions, then you may take it, the Governor has ceased to function under the Reforms. Long Live John Bull! "[1]

Sir Sikander Hyat,[2] who was soon to play an important part in the Punjab politics, deserves some attention. Under the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms Sir Sikander Hyat entered the Punjab Council, but on account of his heavy financial liabilities was interested more in commercial, industrial and banking concerns than in politics.[3] In 1929 when Fazl-i-Husain went to the Government of India for four months, the Governor wanted to appoint Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din, President of the Council, as officiating minister. Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din, after Fazl-i-Husain, was the most prominent Muslim member of the Unionist Party, and was accepted as a leader of the Muslims within the Party. A pledge to this effect was given to him by Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan, Ahmadyar Khan Daultana, and Sir Sikander Hyat. Sir Sikander Hyat had a devoted friend in Ahmadyar Khan Daultana, who through his intercession with Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din, his brother-in-law, made the latter agree to let Sir Sikandar Hyat become Revenue Member in the officiating vacancy, on condition that when in the following year the question of a permanent vacancy arose he would not stand in his way but would support him for it. Sir Sikander Hyat made a favourable impression on the Governor, so that when the permanent vacancy arose in 1930, he was appointed Revenue Member. This disappointed Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din, who was told by Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency that his failure to be selected "was not due to any lack of talents, capacity and character but other

[1] Diary—July 18, 1935.

[2] 1892-1942.

[3] "He was on the Board of Directors of about eleven different concerns including three Railway Companies, Messrs. Owen Roberts, the Punjab and Portland Cement Ltd. He also acted as the Managing Director of the Wah Stone and Lime Company and was the Managing partner of the Mining Syndicate." (Sir Sikander Hyat Khan: *Institute of Current Affairs*, 1943, p. 9.)

considerations." The Governor, who could not have two Muslim members of his cabinet differing from each other, was anxious to make Sir Sikander Hyat Revenue Member, but not if Firoz Khan Noon was unwilling to have Sir Sikander Hyat as his colleague. Sir Sikander Hyat appealed to Fazl-i-Husain and he pleaded with the Maliks and brought about a reconciliation between the two families, as a result of which Sir Sikander Hyat took office as Revenue Member.

Shortly after his appointment Fazl-i-Husain observed in his diary: "Sikander Hyat and I motored to Kalka. We had a chat about many things affecting the Punjab Muslims in various departments. He seems to have been poorly lately, and wonder if he will be able to work hard because he is not well equipped and so has to work harder."[1] Sir Sikander Hyat worked hard but pursued policies of which Fazl-Husain could not but disapprove. In 1932 he moved in Council that His Majesty's Government be asked to provide a Second Chamber for the Punjab. Fazl-i-Husain, who was trying his best to have the proposal for a Second Chamber in Bengal, Bihar and U. P. abandoned, was horrified and asked Chhotu Ram to oppose it as leader of the Unionist Party. Chhotu Ram declared that the proposal was constitutionally retrograde, while financially it would be a "white elephant for the maintenance of which poor zamindars would have to be fleeced." The proposal was rejected in the Council by an overwhelming majority of the elected members.

In 1932, during the illness of Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency, Sir Sikander Hyat officiated as Governor, and got Mr. H. Calvert, I.C.S. to officiate in his own place; although the opportunity could have been availed of to appoint an Indian from public life. Fazl-i-Husain disapproved, but since the transaction was presented to him as a *fait accompli* there was little that he could do. A similar situation arose in 1934 when the Governor, Sir Herbert Emerson, went to England. Sir Sikander Hyat officiated again as Governor for four months, and a Revenue Member had to be appointed temporarily. Sir Sikander Hyat, in agreement with Sir Herbert Emerson, decided that Mr. Miles Irving, I.C.S., should be appointed and should continue to be Revenue

[1] Diary—September 24, 1930.

Member when Sikander Hyat proceeded on four months' leave to England on the conclusion of his term as Governor. As soon as Fazl-i-Husain heard of it he sent for Sir Sikander Hyat and asked him if it was true. Sir Sikander Hyat denied it, and said that the matter was still unsettled, but that he was helpless because Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan had refused to accept the post. Fazl-i-Husain then sent for Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan, and asked him to inform Sir Sikander Hyat that he would be willing to accept the post. Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan obeyed, but discovered from Mr. Miles Irving that the decision had already been taken. Greatly disappointed, Fazl-i-Husain wrote to Sir Sikander Hyat: "It is alleged that as the acting appointment is only for a short term of four months no one cared. This is absolutely false. The question is one of principle. Should the tendency be for the non-official element to take the place of the official element or the reverse? There is no one who is interested in the welfare of India, who would take this light-hearted view of the situation. It should be made clear that now as in the past, in the Punjab or elsewhere, Indian representation in the Cabinet should remain intact and that under no circumstances should an official take the place of a non-official member of Government even for a short time. In the fourteenth year of the Montague Reforms for an official to take the place of a non-official member cannot but be treated as a censure on Indians and a serious reflection on the capacity of public men in the Punjab, and that on both grounds this step is bound to be resented throughout the province."[1]

As soon as Sir Sikander Hyat reached London he gave a statement to the Press to say that "I have the fullest confidence as to the effective working of the administrative machine under the Reforms. Both as a member of Government and acting Governor, I received the fullest co-operation from the I.C.S., the Police and other services. In the Punjab all the communities repose confidence in the British officers of Government, and we hope that under the new Constitution there will be a substantial leavening of the British element in the services." Fazl-i-Husain at once wrote to him: "It

[1] Letter dated June 16, 1934.

(your statement) conveyed ideas which have always invited criticism. The usual thing for a friend to do is to encourage one in what one is doing, but I feel it is the duty of a real friend to tell one what reaction his actions have called forth so that he may know this when considering what to do next."[1] Writing to Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan he commented: "A great deal of publicity was given to Sikander's statement to the Press about the White Paper and the last part of it....has naturally aroused disappointment in certain quarters and indignation in others; and some papers have commented that proposals as to his permanent appointment as a Governor are being matured in London. You say he has gone to the Isle of Man. That must be to see Sir Montague Butler who may be able to put him in the way of meeting some conservative leaders and also putting him in way of being useful to them."[2]

On his return from England Sir Sikander Hyat was appointed Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank on a salary of Rs. 5,500 per mensem. Soon he was so preoccupied with his duties that when in February 1936, Fazl-i-Husain sent[3] him his pamphlet *Punjab Politics* for his criticism and comments the latter replied: "I will go through the pamphlet *Punjab Politics* you have sent me when I have a little leisure and let you have my comments in due course."[4] These comments never came, in fact Sir Sikander Hyat had no time to participate in the foundation and building up of the reorganized Unionist Party of which he was shortly to become the leader.

The only person who held aloft the banner of the Unionist Party in the absence of Fazl-i-Husain was Chhotu Ram, the leader of the Party since 1926. Fazl-i-Husain wrote in his diary: "Saw Chhotu Ram. He is hardworking, intelligent and clear-headed, distinctly and considerably above the average. If my health permits my forming a ministry under the Reforms, it will not be without Chhotu Ram. We had a very satisfactory talk. I wish Firoz were possessed of even half the qualifications which distinguish Chhotu Ram from

[1] Letter dated July 16, 1934.
[2] Letter dated July 16, 1934.
[3] Letter dated February 23, 1936.
[4] Letter dated February 27, 1936.

others."[1] Again, speaking at the inauguration of the Unionist Party Headquarters he said: "Chaudhri Chhotu Ram did excellent work as minister, his work as leader of the Unionist Party is unsurpassed by any leader of a Party in any of the provincial legislatures. The ability, the industry, the sincerity, the enthusiasm, the perseverance, the persistence, the courage and the independence all of which he possesses in pre-eminent degree have won him the gratitude of the Party and of every member of the Party."

Throughout his political career Fazl-i-Husain advocated separate electorates and regarded this mode of representation a vital safeguard for the Muslim community. This, however, did not mean that he made a fetish of it, or that he discarded other methods of representation without critically examining them. Separate electorates were not an end in themselves, they were only a means towards an end, namely, adequate representation of the Muslim community. If this object could be secured by an alternative method more acceptable to other communities he was willing to adopt it. The Communal Award, announced in August 1932, conceded separate electorates but Hindus and Sikhs regarded this mode of representation anti-national and wanted joint electorates to be substituted by mutual agreement. In the Punjab Sir Jogendra Singh and Sir Gokal Chand Narang proposed joint electorates on condition that:

(a) seats are reserved for Muslims and Sikhs in the same proportion as in the Communal Award;
(b) Muslims and non-Muslims are equally represented in the Cabinet;
(c) a Public Services' Commission is constituted to recruit 50% Muslims, 30% Hindus and 20% Sikhs.

These proposals were agreed to by Sir Sikander Hyat, Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din and Ahmadyar Khan Daultana on condition that Fazl-i-Husain had no objection to their acceptance. Fazl-i-Husain said that he had no objection to the acceptance of joint electorates provided the Muslims did not suffer in their representative capacity; or in other words, their population strength was reflected in the electorate. As

[1] Diary—October 19, 1935.

it was although the Muslims constituted 56% of the population they formed only 44% of the electorate, while Sikhs who were only 13% of the population were 24% of the electorate, the Hindu population being almost fully reflected in the electorate. He wanted, therefore, to remove the disparity between the percentage of the population and the percentage of the electorate by adjusting the franchise of the three communities. He was prepared to accept joint electorates provided:

(a) the franchise reflects the population of the three communities in the voting register;

(b) the reservation of seats as prescribed in the Award is confined to general constituencies and not to special constituencies which have joint electorates;

(c) there would be no time-limit for the reservation of seats as the hands of future legislatures cannot be tied;

(d) that arrangements will be made whereby areas having the largest population of any community will return most of the members of that community under the reserved seats system.

Sir Jogendra Singh and Raja Narendra Nath accepted the conditions prescribed by Fazl-i-Husain, but failed to persuade their co-religionists to accept them. Sir Jogendra Singh could get only seven out of thirteen Sikh members of the Legislative Council to sign the proposed agreement. Sardar Ujjal Singh, Sardar Sampuran Singh, Master Tara Singh and Sardar Sant Singh objected to the differential franchise proposed by Fazl-i-Husain and started a tearing campaign against the so called Punjab Formula. At the next meeting of the Khalsa Durbar it was proposed that Singh Sabhas should expel those who had signed the agreement. Sir Jogendra Singh confessed that he was unable to implement his promise as long as the differential franchise was not given up, but Fazl-i-Husain was not prepared to do so. The truth of the matter was that the Sikhs wanted representation in the electorate more than the other com-

munities and were unwilling to give up the advantage which high franchise qualification gave them.[1]

Raja Narendra Nath's voice was a voice in the wilderness and generally the Hindus were strongly against it, and only one Hindu member of the Legislative Council signed the agreement. Sir Gokal Chand Narang, who was hoping that the Hindu-Sikh combination (who were 57% in the existing electoral roll) would be able to dominate the Punjab, refused to abide by the agreement and started a campaign against it. He was fully supported by the Hindu Press in spite of the fact that the Congress and the Hindus had been advocating adult suffrage and on that account logically should have had no objection to the Muslim population being reflected in the voting register. The Punjab Provincial Hindu Youth League held a meeting to protest against the Punjab Formula, and Bhai Permanand threatened to lead an agitation on behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha against it. The Hindus like the Sikhs, who enjoyed a weightage of 6%, were not prepared to forego the advantages which the Communal Award had secured them in the Punjab. Although under the Punjab Formula the Sikhs and the Hindus could influence through voting at least 100 out of 175 constituencies and help the formation of parties on economic rather than communal lines, they conveniently forgot their own, often repeated, argument that the tendency of communal representation is to divide the nation into watertight compartments and create differences where none existed.

Thus the opposition of the Hindus and Sikhs to work joint electorates in case the Muslims had a majority of votes in the voting register according to their population strength clearly showed the selfishness of the Hindu leaders of pro-

[1] While writing to the Aga Khan, Fazl-i-Husain said: "Sikhs constitute 13 per cent of the population and under the agreement they will not be more than 13 per cent in the voting register, and there is no Sikh population anywhere else in India even to the extent of 1 per cent or 2 per cent. That is why it is impossible to think of Sikhs in the future agreeing to joint electorates. The British Government retaining very heavy weightage for the English and the Anglo-Indian will never be able to reduce the Sikh weightage.... Above all, Sikhs even now are not likely to agree to this arrangement. But if by any chance they did, it will be my duty to see that the Hindu and Sikh offer is accepted by the vast majority of the Punjab Muslims, for such a chance is not likely to recur for Muslims for years and years to come." (Letter dated June 26, 1933.)

vinces where they were in a minority, and it also revealed that separate electorates was not the creed of the Muslims but of minorities irrespective of religion. It appeared that the Punjab Hindus had been pressing for joint electorates not because they believed in joint electorates, but because the Muslim voting strength was weak and they could dominate the province. Fazl-i-Husain's readiness to discuss a formula of joint electorates tore asunder the veil that shrouded their designs and the intense selfishness of a minority community wanting to rule over the majority was exposed.

These joint electorate parleys showed remarkably how Fazl-i-Husain was above popular beliefs and prejudices and how he could lead Muslim public opinion into channels hitherto taboo. As soon as it was known that Fazl-i-Husain was entertaining proposals for accepting joint electorates certain urban Muslims like Dr. Iqbal, Sheikh Rahim Bakhsh and Sheikh Din Muhammad raised their voice in protest. Dr. Iqbal held a joint meeting of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League and the Punjab Muslim Conference and condemned the Punjab Formula. It was rumoured that Dr. Iqbal was expecting a donation of Rs. 75,000 and intended taking over the *Eastern Times* to oppose joint electorates. The *Inqilab* opined that although the Muslims were indebted to Fazl-i-Husain for many things, they would reject this proposal, just as similar proposals made by Dr. Ansari and Abul Kalam Azad had been rejected by the Muslims, and that they could not allow him to lead the Muslim League or the Muslim Conference or any other Muslim organization.[1] Fazl-i-Husain felt that the Muslims who opposed the formula did not understand it and at once wrote to Dr. Iqbal: "As things stand you know perfectly well that I am definitely against joint electorates, but it does not mean that in the Punjab under no circumstances can I be for joint electorates. The Lothian Franchise Committee and His Majesty's Government agreed to have a differentiating franchise in the case of depressed classes and in the case of women, but refused to have it in case of Muslims in the Punjab. Under the proposed agreement Muslims, who hitherto have been a

[1] Dated May 28, 1933.

minority in the voting register will gain a majority in the electorate and can, therefore, have no justification in asking for separate electorates....To sum up, of the eighty-four constituencies reserved for Muslims, Muslims will have majorities in every one of them, while of the seventy-three Hindu and Sikh constituencies, in as many as twenty-six Hindus and Sikhs will not have their majority, with the result that the election in these twenty-six constituencies can be controlled by Muslims; or to put it differently, over and above the seats reserved for Muslims, in twenty-six out of seventy-three, Muslims have considerable influence in getting reasonable, fair-minded and just Hindus and Sikhs returned, and surely this is bound to make for stability of parties and establishment of responsible government."

These arguments and several others which Fazl-i-Husain advanced put Dr. Iqbal and his supporters in a more reasonable mood and most of them agreed to support the proposals. Objections, however, appeared from another quarter, namely, the Muslim delegates[1] to the Round Table Conference in London, and the Aga Khan, speaking for the leading members of the Delegation, protested on the grounds that:

"(i) it will break up the solidarity of Muslims in India. It is only after a great deal of work that we have been able to build up a united programme for Muslims which is supported by every Province throughout India. Our community will then be disorganized and split into innumerable fragments;

"(ii) it will produce a very deep cleavage between the Muslims of the Eastern and Western Punjab, and Muslims belonging to the rural areas and those who come from the urban areas;

"(iii) it will be difficult to prevent every part of the Communal Award being topsy-turvy, and Muslims in minority provinces will be dragged into the discussion of the percentages to which they would be entitled as a result of this pact between the Hindus,

[1] The Aga Khan, Dr. Shafaat Ahmad, Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan, A. H. Ghaznavi.

Sikhs and others of the Punjab. The Punjab question does not and cannot stand alone, it is a part of the all-India question and however strongly and persistently we may try to localize this issue it will be found that the whole question of communal proportions throughout India will be reopened for discussion;

"(iv) we have succeeded in settling this problem after years of strenuous work and campaign for our rights which is unparalleled in the history of modern Islam in India. If this question is reopened for discussion, I am very much afraid that all our efforts will be thrown away;

"(v) the Diehards here are very active and there is a very great fear indeed of Provincial Autonomy being shorn of a great deal of its vigour. I very much fear that if this communal question is raised afresh we will play into the hands of the Diehards, who will insist on reserving law and order throughout India."[1]

Fazl-i-Husain explained the proposal as he had done to Dr. Iqbal and *inter alia* added: "Indian Muslims cannot ignore a patent fact that they have been left in the lurch so far as Bengal is concerned, and that is entirely due to the fact that the British representation on the local legislature is excessive. The only province where, therefore, Muslims can consolidate their position and not remain at the absolute mercy of the Governor or other communities is the Punjab, provided in the province they can secure co-operation of certain sections of Hindus and Sikhs. If the Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab are prepared to concede this (differential franchise) to Muslims, why should Muslims, provided they lose nothing thereby, refuse to make friends? It seems to me, therefore, that if Hindus and Sikhs support this arrangement, it would be wrong on the part of Muslims not to take advantage of it. . . .Lastly, the question of smooth working: Surely, if a general settlement between all communities is arrived at, the chances of smooth working are ever so much greater than when they start with embittered feelings as at

[1] Letter dated May 10, 1933 from the Aga Khan.

present. You may well ask: if the thing is so simple and so clear, why should there be this anxiety in certain quarters in Lahore, and why has Iqbal been sending telegrams to London and to the Press? Well, this is because politics in India are run in imitation of politics in England, and political parties without intrigue of some sort or other cannot exist. In view of the forthcoming elections, a few people in Lahore have got hold of the idea that under the Reforms, men with large landed interests, or men high up in professions, or men of families of note, have done themselves very well, and that the city people in some cases feel that they have been left out. They want to form a group of urban people, what they call non-zamindara people, so as to obtain a majority in the new Council. They consider that in picking up a man like Zafrullah Khan, so to speak, from the unknown I have not acted rightly, and their protest is taking this form. I have no doubt whatsoever that these people are misguided and that before very long they will discover that they are not serving the interests they have at heart, and towards Iqbal they are acting like foolish friends who are bound to prove worse than wise enemies. The best thing to do is to consider these proposals entirely on their merits. I trust this will reassure you that there is no danger and that the result of all this consultation, discussion, and controversy will, on the whole, be beneficial for Muslims."[1] This convinced the Muslim delegates in London that the Punjab Formula was highly desirable both from the Muslim and the national point of view, and they agreed to stand by it if the Hindus and the Sikhs accepted it. But the Hindus and the Sikhs refused to agree and the negotiations failed.

[1] Letter dated June 5, 1933.

## CHAPTER XVIII

## *THE SHAHIDGUNJ AGITATION*

THE Shahidgunj agitation of 1935 is a sad chapter in the history of the Punjab. According to the Sikh Gurdwara Act of 1925, the property owned by Sikh shrines was to be ascertained, in order that the management might be vested in committees constituted under the Act. A dispute arose with regard to an old mosque to the south of what is now the Naulakha Bazar in the city of Lahore. During the time of Ranjit Singh the mosque came to be occupied by the custodians of the Gurdwara of Bhai Taru Singh situated in the precincts of the mosque. During early British rule one Nur Ahmad claimed to be a Mutawalli of the mosque but all his civil suits failed. The Muslims now tried to obtain relief from the Gurdwara Tribunal, but without success. In 1927 Government declared that the old mosque belonged to the Sikh Gurdwara Shahidgunj Bhai Taru Singh. Among seventeen claims made by various petitioners, the Anjuman-i-Islamia of Lahore claimed that the land and property were dedicated to a mosque and did not belong to the Gurdwara. The cases failed on account of adverse possession and while the Anjuman did not appeal, the appeals made by others were dismissed by the High Court. In March 1935 the property was handed over to the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee for management. The committee began to build a northern bazar wall and partial demolition of the old structure was embarked on.

Tension grew rapidly and large Muslim crowds collected near the mosque to prevent its demolition. On July 20, arrests were made, and when the mob refused to disperse the military fired and caused several casualties. The position was made worse by the fact that while Government

sympathised with the Muslims no decisive action was taken. Muslim leaders failed to improve the situation; at a meeting held on the 23rd July it was suggested that Fazl-i-Husain might be requested to come to Lahore from Abbottabad (where he had gone to recover from his illness) and extricate the Muslims from a most difficult position. Fazl-i-Husain was suffering from one of his severe attacks of bronchitis and could not go to Lahore to take part in the controversy.[1] But he closely studied the whole situation in the light of day to day information received from his friends, and decided to give the Muslims a correct lead. He believed that nothing could come out of the agitation except a few murders, a few death sentences, and general bitterness. He felt that the position of the Muslims, in so far as they proposed to take direct action in contravention of the decree of a civil court, was unwarranted. He had the moral courage to say so publicly, and attempted to undo the harm done by agitators and Muslim leaders in Lahore in refraining from publicly disapproving of the agitation. Strictly speaking, he said, Muslims had but one grievance against the Sikhs, namely, the actual demolition of the damaged mosque building. Their claim first for the mosque and then for the restoration of the site was not well-founded, and Sikhs could not reasonably be asked to give up what they had gained after prolonged litigation which had been started by the Muslims. Still less were the Muslims justified in urging that they should have the site as a result of the agitation because they had failed to get it through law. The only possible solution was to negotiate an agreement to refrain from building on the site of the mosque.

On the other hand, it looked as if Government was utilizing the whole affair to break the Muslim solidarity which had been a strong factor in Punjab politics during the last fourteen years. Fazl-i-Husain wrote to every Muslim leader in Lahore strongly disapproving of the agitation, and asked them to publish a statement to this effect at the earliest opportunity. Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din issued an appeal against direct action by the Muslims. The position would have improved substantially, and the Muslims quietened

[1] Diary—July 23, 1935.

down, had Government agreed that the Sikhs had acted unreasonably in refusing to compromise on the issue of demolition of the building on the site of the mosque. But none of the Muslim leaders could induce the Governor to agree to this, and the suggestion of Fazl-i-Husain was turned down by Sir Herbert Emerson for fear of Sikh displeasure. The Sikhs had promised to hold their hand but nevertheless demolished the mosque. Government promised to do something but did nothing. Muslims were exasperated because they felt they had been deceived. The net result was that the agitators and those who espoused direct action gained in sympathy and public esteem all round, and their wrong doing was converted into heroism and martyrdom.[1]

Thus the position grew from bad to worse, and the bitterness among Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs increased rapidly. Firoz Khan Noon was unable to give any definite lead and blamed both sides for not listening to Government.[2] When Fazl-i-Husain took him to task for this he wrote back saying that he was helpless because the Governor was cowed by the Sikhs and refused to listen to Muslim grievances or claims. Fazl-i-Husain at once wrote back that if what he was saying was true, and Muslims were denied equality of treatment in the maintenance of law and order, he would risk his health and return to Lahore, and if the Governor did not come to terms, he would take the lead and act. In reply Firoz Khan Noon begged Fazl-i-Husain not to come and wrote that British officials were all for Muslims.[3] Meanwhile Government brought pressure to bear on the leading Muslim

[1] Diary—August 6, 1935.

[2] "Firoz is apparently of the view that he is 'making hay.' He is out to be popular amongst Muslims—frequents mosques, says amen to all the popular slogans about mosques, goes for *Fateha* to the houses of the killed, pays visits to the wounded in hospitals, has cut out others—Muzaffar Khan, Ahmadyar and Shahab-ud-Din, by readily carrying out the Governor's wishes, and thus not allowing his rivals to steal a march over him. He is playing the game that they initiated. He is bound to be disillusioned and disappointed before long. He thinks that he has rendered great service to Government, and that the Governor will be grateful to him, and his position is thereby secured. I believe he has tumbled to the situation that if I am on account of health unable to resume public life and Sikander being occupied elsewhere, he should exert himself to take the chief place, and this he proposes to get through the Governor's goodwill, while he has been abusing the Governor right and left....His letters to me have been funny." (Diary—July 30, 1935.)

[3] Diary—August 16, 1935.

members of the Municipality, and the Municipality gave sanction to the Sikhs to build near the demolished mosque. Sikhs began to build but the public was kept ignorant of what was happening within the four walls of the mosque area.

In order to divert Muslim attention from the Shahidgunj mosque, Government started propaganda about two Bills it was proposed to introduce in the Council for their benefit. One was the Muslim Graveyards' Bill prepared by Firoz Khan Noon. The Bill had no bearing on the dispute vexing the Muslims.[1] The other Bill was the Auqaf Bill prepared by Mir Maqbool Mahmood on the lines of the Gurdwara Act and was likely to create parties and dissensions among Muslims on an unprecedented scale. Fazl-i-Husain pointed out that both the Bills would create further trouble among the Muslims, and though they might distract the Muslim attention from Shahidgunj for the time being, in the long run dissatisfaction among the Muslims would continue to grow on account of Government favouritism towards the Hindus and Sikhs and the ineffectiveness of Muslim members of Government, who allowed Muslim interests to suffer. In reply to this Firoz Khan Noon said: "The Governor was keen on preventing a strong Muslim Government being set up, and hence all the trouble."[2] In despair Fazl-i-Husain recorded in his diary: "I give it up, it is impossible to under-

[1] "I have read Firoz's Graveyards' Bill. It enables Local Government to institute a purely nominated committee to take over a public graveyard where it likes and when it likes, but the grounds for the exercise of discretion are not given and no provision for finances, though the committee cannot function unless it has funds presented to it. For a purely nominated Committee to collect funds, and then disburse, and supplement existing administration—the whole is too much in the air. For a minister, on the eve of Reforms, to satisfy Muslims that they are being invested with democratic powers in purely religious matters though to a less extent than the Sikhs, and give them this Committee, and Local Government absolute discretion at all stages and in all matters—it is not intelligible how a minister can do a thing like this. The measure is not only useless, but most mischievous, and anti-self-government in principle and almost in every way. Saw Firoz regarding all the troubles. Asked about Graveyards' Bill. He said it has no connection with the trouble, that only Miani graveyard of Lahore was involved, and that nomination will be unpopular, and there was no guarantee that nominated members will be any better than elected members. Curiously, he, in answer to my question, admitted that the Governor told him that nomination will be objected to, and yet he kept it on. I give it up—it is impossible to understand him." (Diary—October 8, 1935.)

[2] Diary—September 23, 1935.

stand him. What is needed is a complete overhauling, both Firoz and Muzaffar should go, and really capable men tried. They may do no better, but nothing like trying."[1]

In September 1935 the agitators and the Muslim Press openly asked for recourse to civil disobedience, whereupon Fazl-i-Husain wrote to Syed Habib definitely and categorically expressing himself against it: "Firstly, civil disobedience has been tried during the last fifteen years throughout India and has failed in all cases and in all provinces with the possible exception of the Sikhs, who adopted it in the early years of 1921 decade. The Muslim proposal now is simply imitative, i.e. to imitate the Sikhs in the hope that they will do as well as the Sikhs, if not better and thereby defeat the Government as the Sikhs did and establish their prestige, and the Government in future will be frightened of them as they believe it is frightened of the Sikhs. I will not argue whether the assumption that Sikhs defeated the Government is right or not, or whether now the Government is frightened of the Sikhs or not, but for the sake of argument let us assume that both these assumptions are well-founded. The question is whether the Muslims now can do what the Sikhs did in the early years of 1921 decade. They cannot:

"(a) The Sikhs were a small community; the movement was led by the Akalis and directed against the Mahants who were non-Sikhs and the Sikhs had intimidated all sections of Sikhs into submission to them and the Government of the day had taken up the attitude that the Akalis were bent upon religious reform and Government should not stand in the way of that reform.

(b) Government had not then all the powers to deal with civil disobedience that it has today.

(c) Government had not then the experience of dealing with the movement then that it has today.

(d) The British Government then was quite different from the British Government of today.

[1] Diary—October 8, 1935.

(e) There was civil disobedience in those days in all provinces and in almost all communities. It was rising. Today it is a discredited movement.

(f) Today Government is determined to undo the mischief that was done by what is called its weakness in those days, and I am convinced that if the Sikhs had tried their strength at civil disobedience today for the first time they would not have succeeded to the extent that they did 10-15 years ago. Muslims want to take up a method which has been tried and which has failed. They are taking it up at a time when Government is much stronger than it was before. They are taking it up against a community which is strong and organized and not weak like the Mahants who were left in the lurch by the Hindus.

"Secondly, there is no one in the Government strong enough to take an independent attitude and see that justice and fairplay is assured even to those who are guilty of defiance of law.....Thirdly, failure is bound to bring further discredit on the community and those associated with it. Loss of prestige, loss inflicted on individuals and groups, large sections of the community disowning the people who are promoting this policy, leading to disruption, and this on the eve of the introduction of reforms."[1]

Thus, while Fazl-i-Husain considered direct action on the part of the Muslims legally unjustified and politically inexpedient, he felt at the same time that the Sikhs had showed no regard for Muslim feelings and their attitude was one of opposition to all constituted authority. This attitude, he considered, was inspired by Government. The protection given by Government to Sikhs in destroying the mosque was beyond the rights secured to the Sikhs by the Gurdwara Tribunal. Had the Sikhs brought a suit in a civil court to adjudicate the right to demolish the mosque and obtained a decree to that effect, they would then have been justified, from a strictly legal point of view, in demolishing it; but Government had afforded the Sikhs protection in doing what they wanted to do by taking the law in their own hands.

[1] Letter dated September 9, 1935.

While analysing the political situation which had culminated in the Shahidgunj affair, Fazl-i-Husain wrote to Nawab Muzaffar Khan: "The position was, though one of tension, still quite sound up till 1932. The Communal Award was taken up by the Hindus and the Sikhs in the Punjab for agitation against the Muslims and the Government. This agitation was allowed to proceed and become intense and in the course of it threats of defiance of law, breach of peace and bloodshed were hurled about. Still Government took no notice of all these things. The Muslims were on the defensive and during the last three years it appears that the policy of Government had been to do everything to appease the Hindus and the Sikhs, probably because Government felt that, as the Hindus and Sikhs were already very sore on account of the Communal Award, every effort should be made to please them; and in keeping with this policy the treatment meted out to Muslims was one of indifference and possibly, in some cases, of injustice. Again, probably due to the reason that the Muslim community has been favoured in the matter of the Communal Award and therefore no harm will be done by taking them a peg or two down. During this period the extremists among the Muslims felt that Muslims were down in their luck and that a reign of terror was not far off. The Hindus and Sikhs were organizing and intimidating others; they should also take a hand in this venture. They constituted themselves into the Ahrars. They had the support, direct or indirect, of many prominent Muslims for different reasons and it is believed of many Government officials. This put them in funds and organized them. The Ahmadi business came to them as a god-send and there again many influential people, and possibly some Government officials, helped them. The spirit of defiance of law among the Muslims was thus developed and whether the leadership of those who have imbibed the spirit remains with the Ahrars or someone else is immaterial. As I always pointed out to His Excellency the Governor and my friends, it was dangerous to play this game. The Muslim community is treading the path which the Hindus and the Sikhs have been treading in the past. The animus displayed by the Muslim community against the sister communities is only a

reaction to the spirit which the two communities displayed to the knowledge of the Government towards the Muslim community during the last three years....Frankly, the prevailing idea amongst the Muslim community today is that the Punjab Government is bent upon acting unjustly and unfairly towards them; that it is afraid of the Sikhs, that the combination of the Sikhs and the Hindus is too much for the Government to tackle and that in the discomfiture of the Muslim community both the Hindu-cum-Sikh combination and many Government officials see an escape from the possibility of a Muslim Government being established under the reforms."[1]

The Muslims filed a suit about the demolition and recovery of the mosque in the court of the District Judge and the decision given against them was greatly resented by them. Fazl-i-Husain unhesitatingly asked the Muslims to drop the matter. They protested and said this meant defeat; but he told them that they had been defeated at all stages, and there was no point in courting more defeats.[2] "If Muslims," he added, "had not made utter fools of themselves and committed blunder after blunder in handling this matter, and if *Pirs* and politicians had not for the sake of popularity and very temporary and ephemeral applause acted in a manner most prejudicial to Muslim interests this matter would have been closed long ago."[3]

The agitation, however, continued and Government refused to release the detenues. Muslims embarked on a civil disobedience movement. Fazl-i-Husain advised Government to settle the matter of the Shahqaqu grave so as to assist a compromise on the issue of Shahidgunj. He asked Government to resume the policy of holding the balance even, and not showing favours to one community at the expense of the other. He also asked Government to repudiate unequivocally the rumours of suspicions that communal trouble was not unwelcome to the official world. Towards the end of February 1936, all the prisoners were

[1] Letter dated September 21, 1935.

[2] The appeal to the High Court was dismissed in 1938, and the appeal to the Privy Council was dismissed in 1940 in accordance with the provisions of the Limitation Act.

[3] Diary—January 14. 1936.

released and newspaper security orders were cancelled. Government gave up the Shah Chiragh mosque, which quietened down the Muslims to some extent, but the question of the site of the Shahidgunj still rankled in their minds.

In June 1936 Fazl-i-Husain prepared a scheme and sent it to the Governor, Sir Herbert, and a large number of his Hindu and Muslim friends. "While the Shahidgunj case," he wrote, "is running its unfortunate course the point of the greatest possible importance for the Muslims is to calmly think over the real trouble and to see what can be done to prevent its reccurrence." He explained that according to Muslim belief, what was once a *waqf* was always a *waqf*, but it often happened in practice that the *Auqaf* were abuse or extinguished by the neglect and dishonesty of the trustees, and the ignorance and carelessness of the beneficiaries. Whenever the *Mutawalli* (the trustee) went wrong, he abused the endowment, left the mosque, and converted the *waqf* property to his personal use. He was able to do all this because the majority of the Muslim worshippers did not bother to check him. This was a growing evil which existed not only in the Punjab but all over India. No solution had been found for it by legislation, and various communities had failed to combat it.

"What is required," Fazl-i-Husain concluded, "was to take steps to prevent recurrence of such criminal negligence on the part of Muslim *Mutawallis* and Muslim worshippers of mosques and invest some Government authority with power to prevent the abuse of *Auqaf*. In Muslim countries such work is done by the *Auqaf* Department of Government and in England by the Chancery, but in India the matter has been left to each community to look after their own religious endowments with the result that *Auqaf* are not registered, no one knows whether a particular property is *waqf* or not, and the question of their control does not arise." Fazl-i-Husain proposed the appointment of a Commission of Enquiry and a survey by the Commission of *Auqaf* of both Hindus and Muslims. He wanted a summary enquiry into their terms of trust and an authentic official

register for each community in every place throughout the province, giving the extent of the property and the nature and conditions of every religious endowment. When registration is completed then under civil law every *Mutawalli* should be made liable to render annual accounts by submitting them to the civil court in whose jurisdiction the *waqf* is situated, while a Superintendent of *Auqaf* should be appointed to scrutinize those accounts, and to see that they are in accordance with the terms of the endowments, failing which he may ask the civil authority to proceed against the trustees, a provision being made that in grievous cases of default the right of *Tauliat* be forfeited and the *Mutawalli* be replaced by a public control of the endowment.

Fazl-i-Husain maintained that this was the only way of dealing satisfactorily with the problem. A Mosque Act and a Temple Act, like the Gurdwara Act of 1925, which were contemplated by Government, would not serve the purpose; because the Gurdwara Act divested *Mahants* of their rights and reduced different forms of worship in Gurdwaras to one uniform practice, which would be strongly resented by Muslims as well as Hindus. Their various sects attached great importance to the variety of forms of worship, and would prefer to retain sectarian control rather than sacrifice it for the sake of uniformity. The result of such legislation would be a tremendous clash of opinion and the splitting up of each community into hundreds of parties, the disruption in Hindu and Muslim society causing a profound confusion in the Punjab.

All Muslims to whom the proposal was circulated agreed that this was the best solution of the problem, but a fierce opposition from *Mutawallis* and *Pirs* was expected, and it was said that since *Gaddinashins* were numerous and influential, the proposal coming from Fazl-i-Husain as leader of the Unionist Party might prove detrimental to Party interests. Fazl-i-Husain replied that in principle they could have no reasonable objection, and a just and proper cause should not fail for fear of unpopularity. Government circles objected on financial grounds; to which Fazl-i-Husain replied that if the evils were recognized, as also the desire of various communities to eradicate them, and to place their endow-

ments on a sure and honest basis, it was the duty of Government to find ways and means to meet this pressing demand.

As this proposal was not likely to affect the issue of the Shahidgunj mosque, it was indeed a courageous move on the part of Fazl-i-Husain to adopt a line of action contrary to popular feelings. He wanted a change of law rather than pursue a futile controversy by defying the existing law. All that could be done by mutual agreement with Sikhs was to prevent the site from being desecrated or built upon by them. His appeal to the people was criticized but on the whole it had a sobering effect on Muslim enthusiasts and made them think. When the situation eased a little, he formulated his proposal in the form of a Bill. In order to secure public approval and to convince the people that the proposed Bill was in their best interests, throughout June he held consultations with various Muslim leaders and newspaper editors.

As regards the Shahidgunj mosque he also formulated a plan of action. Processions and meetings were to be voluntarily stopped, and display of force was to be discontinued. The Muslim Press was to impose a self-denying ordinance upon itself and cease to agitate the public mind. The Governor in return was to declare that the Sikhs could build on the site of the mosque but in view of the matter being sub-judice Government would not recognize the building as legal. Pending the decision of the Court both communities were to bury the hatchet and proceed in the matter only after obtaining a legal decision in support of the action they contemplated. This experience, he said, should teach the Muslims to be vigilant in future about their *Auqaf* and to safeguard them by legislation.

Two weeks later Fazl-i-Husain died, and the Shahidgunj dispute remained unsettled till 1940. Four long years of strife caused untold harm to the Muslim community, which suffered in prestige and self-respect and lost money in litigation; while hundreds of young Muslims received injuries, languished in prisons, or died facing lathi charges and firing. And eventually nothing was achieved as far as Shahidgunj was concerned, and *Auqaf* legislation was forgotten by the successors of Fazl-i-Husain.

## CHAPTER XIX

### *REORGANIZATION OF THE UNIONIST PARTY*

WHEN the term of Fazl-i-Husain as Executive Councillor was drawing to a close, people wondered what he was going to do next.[1] The officials asked why he had refused to accept an extension of his term as Executive Councillor. His health of course was bad, but it had always been so, and no one believed that he would be a mere spectator and watch the political game played around him without participating in it himself. Sir Sikander Hyat suggested that he might take his place as Revenue Member in the Punjab, but he replied: "You ask me whether there is any objection to your mentioning the possibility of my taking your place...this is just the same as asking for my appointment...neither directly nor indirectly should my name be suggested in this connection...The usual attraction of power, prestige and authority do not appeal to me. Probably, what has been attracting me has been work, and therefore, in abstaining from entering upon a venture like this, I will not be denying myself anything for which my soul may be craving."[2] Writing to his son in England, he dismissed the current speculations about himself by saying: "As to what I am going to do, there is no lack of conjectures in the Indian Press and in the minds of my friends and foes. The beauty of it is that none

[1] Fazl-i-Husain wrote to his wife: "You have asked me about the truth in the various rumours about me. The truth is that for fourteen years I have occupied high offices. Now in different circles various opinions are growing. Some want that I should again occupy some high office while others wish that some relation or friend of theirs should have a chance. But the fact is that on 1st April, 1935, I shall be relieved of my duties and considering my health an energy, I have decided not to practise as a lawyer, but if after some time I recover my strength and health I shall give legal consultations at home and for the rest I shall spend my time in prayer. One should try to free oneself from worldly affairs." (Letter dated January 17, 1935—Urdu.)

[2] Letter dated November 8, 1934.

of them can be right because they are making conjectures about a thing which does not exist. I have no programme, my mind is absolutely blank. It is probably due to low vitality, feeling of tiredness, weariness and exhaustion. I simply feel that I cannot be bothered as to the programme. I drift after a very strenuous life. I am devoid of any holiday and I feel that I have a right to it. I am getting along drifting but soon when that stage is reached there will be no difficulty in framing a programme. My friends and foes are busy making programmes for me but none of the programmes so far suggested in the Press attract me. I was asked to join the Punjab Government as Revenue Member, but on enquiry the offer was found to involve certain happenings which rendered my acceptance difficult, if not impossible, and I had to express my regret that I could not accept the offer. At times I feel that I have done enough and I should retire from public life. I am, therefore, content to leave matters to luck and to enjoy drifting. Yes, it is curious that even such clever and shrewd men like Sir Shadi Lal and others should refuse to believe that I am in need of rest and cannot work any more. These people attribute to me superhuman qualities. As to Sir Shadi Lal saying that we should come to an understanding, he is quite right, but unfortunately the Hindus in the Punjab have no leader and do not place confidence in any one. Sir Shadi Lal was the only man in whose ability and capacity they had faith and confidence. Therefore, coming to a settlement is more difficult than ever. Still, every effort should be made to arrive at a settlement. I wonder whether Sir Shadi Lal feels amused that some time back a movement was started in the Punjab to the effect that Sir Shadi Lal wanted to take part in the public life of the province and to take a hand in the politics under the Reforms, but that I being a very clever man made His Majesty's Government appoint him a Privy Councillor and thus he was taken away from the Punjab so that he may not stand against me in becoming the Chief Minister, and the Hindu Press has been doing a great deal of propaganda on these lines, attributing to me great in-

fluence and spiritual powers which enable me to spirit away all clever men who are likely to be my rivals."[1]

On the eve of Fazl-i-Husain's retirement, Khwaja Hasan Nizami of Delhi issued an appeal to Muslims to observe March 29, 1935, as "Fazl-i-Husain Day", and after *Juma* prayers to offer prayers for his health. The Ahmadiya Jamat issued a similar appeal to its followers all over India. Practically all Muslim newspapers wrote about his services to his community in highly appreciative terms. The Muslim members of the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly entertained him to a farewell lunch party.[2] The only dissident voice was that of the Ahrars.

He handed over charge of his office, and reached Lahore on the morning of the April 1. He alighted at Lahore the veriest shadow of a human figure, an old man, weak and emaciated, with dark rings round his eyes, and thin worn-out face. At the railway station he was publicly received with an enthusiasm never shown by the Punjabis to any leader before or since. The Municipality offered an address of civic welcome at the Town Hall; in reply to which he said: "You have asked me to bring the controversy relating to the communal question to a close. We did succeed twenty years or so ago in settling the matter. Since then misunderstandings, misrepresentations, misapprehensions, and also mistakes have undone the good that national effort had achieved. Some political organisations pursued methods which were not quite orthodox and confusion and discord prevailed. The last few years have shown how national effort has been sapped of its energy and strength. It is not, it cannot be impossible to restore mutual confidence and trust without which no settlement can work. If in rendering this service to the country the very last ounce of energy is needed, I shall gladly consecrate it and deem it a privilege."

Fazl-i-Husain had barely time to settle down in Lahore when the Muslim Press began to clamour for his return to politics. Under the caption "An Appeal to Mian Fazl-i-Husain," a newspaper wrote: "The condition of the Punjab Muslims is weak and the community is unfairly treated....

[1] Letter dated March 18, 1935, to Azim Husain.

[2] March 30, 1935.

Muslims are unorganized and their leaders are weak and work for show. The Muslims have turned their eyes towards heaven and are praying to God to send them a capable leader."[1] A little later the *Star* wrote: "The Muslim community in the Punjab now presents the curious spectacle of a leaderless mob, without any organization, policy or programme....The Punjab Muslim hero, the great Mian Sahib, can no longer be allowed to rest....and should come back to the frontline trenches....He alone can unravel this tangle, and to him alone we should turn."[2]

Various friends wrote to him urging him to return to politics again. Sir Shafaat Ahmad, for example, wrote: "Muslims will be exposed to the dangers of isolation and provincialism after the introduction of provincial autonomy; unless we have a general policy and a common ideal which is at once practical and inspirational we shall involve ourselves in the interim struggle for power, ministerships, jobs and leadership. The Muslim Conference programme has been exhausted. It is empty of content. I have been scratching my head in vain for the last two years in a vain search for a new programme for Muslim India, but am like a blind man groping in the dark. You alone can do it. It will serve as a beacon to all of us."[3] Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din wrote: "All I can say is that without your lead the Muslims will be nowhere. So you must live and lead the unfortunate Muslims as long as you can."[4] Mir Maqbool Mahmood wrote: "Mian Sahib, you are our acknowledged leader whose intellect and sincerity we all respect and must continue to lead us."[5] Even non-Muslims expressed similar views. Sardar Ujjal Singh wrote: "The province looks upon you as the one man who can successfully pilot the Reforms Scheme even amidst stormy waters."[6]

The Aga Khan wrote in a similar strain and made concrete suggestions by saying: "What should be the future policy of the Muslims of India? We are in India in a minority (not

[1] *Paisa Akhbar*, dated April 14, 1935.
[2] Dated September 2, 1935.
[3] Letter dated November 7, 1935.
[4] Letter dated August 4, 1935.
[5] Letter dated July 25, 1935.
[6] Letter dated September 2, 1935.

even one-fourth of the population) and for all the time we have to live in India and for all time we have the Hindu majority by our sides. This position would indeed have been an extremely difficult one if the Muslims were 25% all over the country, and Hindus everywhere in a majority. But as things are, fortunately, it is not so bad, for in one part, however small, we are a positive majority, a frontier province touching independent Muslim States, and another touching the sea. Again, in Bengal, which is a frontier maritime province, we have a majority....These being the circumstances, what are we to do? To this there is only one answer: that we should take advantage of our position in the North, and in Bengal, and get all the natural advantages we can out of it. First, in all-India affairs we should be out and out federalists using all our influence so that our provinces get at least such autonomy as the great Indian Princes will enjoy under the Federation. Secondly, gradually by changing the character of the Army from a professional force to a territorial one and having for each province the kind of advantage that Bavaria had in the old German Empire (which great Princes will have in the new Indian Federation), by using all our strength for this legitimate end make India what she really is, i.e. a United States of Southern Asia rather than something on the model of present day Italy or Germany. Thirdly, internally we must strengthen our numbers by child welfare, by hygienic home life, by intensive education and by the upkeep of our national individuality as Indians within India. There must be keenest religious and secular education and we must open our arms as wide as possible to adopt members of the depressed classes. All this will need money and we are economically weaker than our neighbours. Here is the crux of our policy. How are these things to be carried out? In self-interest, if for no other reason, our attitude should be hardest possible political work on the lines of moderate State socialism, a policy that will get for us the sympathy of many depressed and poor Hindus as well as being in touch with the world movement—even in such reactionary countries as Germany and Italy. Our members in all the provinces (and especially in Bengal) should always be on the side of putting as many

taxation burdens as possible on the upper and middle classes and reducing as much as they can indirect taxes, which fall generally on the poor. This being the case we have to start a real Economic Party with a semi-Socialist programme throughout each province and a purely Federalist programme for the Centre."[1]

Fazl-i-Husain carefully considered these suggestions, and at last decided, despite the marked deterioration of his health, to take the lead and set to work. Active participation in politics was bound to entail serious physical effort, and physicians doubted if he could withstand the strain. When Sir Sikandar Hyat remonstrated that it might prove fatal to his health, he replied: "It is too late in the day to cry halt now. I have carried on despite ailments for twenty years or more and will continue to carry on until I have exhausted the last ounce of energy left in me. What better could I wish for than to die in harness for the sake of my province and my country?" In January 1936 he called a meeting at his house of journalists and prominent leaders of all communities, and made an appeal asking for the removal of communal disharmony and rivalry among different groups. "Just as in Europe," he said, "various countries distrust each other and arm themselves, similarly in the Punjab, Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims have developed mutual mistrust and are organizing themselves against each other. Somewhere there is a dispute over language, somewhere volunteers are being enlisted, but the Government is firm and has the power to perpetuate law and order. Internecine warfare is rife among us and we are not safe from each other's hands. Under the circumstances, it is improbable that we would secure Swaraj, and even if we do get it, it would be difficult to retain it; whether we get Swaraj or not, it is essential that all parties in India should live amicably with each other."

The Aga Khan came to India in February 1936 and Fazl-i-Husain utilized the occasion for announcing his programme for working the new Constitution. He called a meeting of the Executive Board of the All-India Muslim Conference at Delhi, and asked the Aga Khan to deliver the presidential

[1] Letter dated August 13, 1935.

address which was adopted as a resolution indicating the programme for the future. It defined the "attitude which Indian Muslims should adopt with regard to the future politics of India," and it affirmed that "the Conference should make a declaration that the Muslims put India first, being as much their motherland as of other races who inhabit India."

"India," said the presidential address after a survey of the past, "is now entering a new phase of political life. Indian Muslims are ready to take their due share in developing political life in the best interests of the country. Their political goal is dominion status. They feel India's most pressing needs are, externally, securing recognition in other countries. Indians are not fairly treated whether in the dominions or in the colonies. At home Indians must have economic reorganization—there is a wide gulf between different sections of Indians—extreme poverty, hunger and nakedness, emaciated enfeebled bodies and ignorance is the lot of a vast majority of them. They are called human beings only by courtesy. They are both economically and religiously depressed. With this denial of divinity of mankind, there is a denial of human brotherhood and we have developed intolerance in matters religious and sectarian. The whole economic, social and religious fabric calls for immediate relief—uplift of the weak—economically, intellectually and culturally—so that there may be no one left to be called depressed. . . . The future programme is for *uplift*, personal, spiritual, moral, intellectual economic; not only personal, not only of the families, but also of the poor, the masses, the needy and the backward. It is this noble work of uplift with which we should concern ourselves irrespective of considerations of caste, colour and creed, thus the prescription which thoughtful Indians prescribe for the betterment of India is uplift at home, and securing her people honourable status abroad."

Fazl-i-Husain felt convinced that in the Punjab Muslims could not work the Reforms successfully without Hindu support; therefore means of co-operation must be explored. The communal problem, he said, must be solved provincially according to the peculiar conditions of each province, and the issues must not be confused by attempting to evolve a

common formula for most diverse conditions existing in different parts of India. He, therefore, decided to reconstitute the Unionist Party in the Punjab and asked his friends in the U. P. to form a National Agriculturist Party in the U. P., adding that it was intended that similar non-communal parties should be formed in other provinces. In order to set an example of what he advocated, he put forward concrete proposals for the reorganization of the Unionist Party in the Punjab in his pamphlet *Punjab Politics.*[1] This pamphlet

[1] In this pamphlet after analysing various new religious movements (e.g. the Arya Samaj, Akali, and Ahmadi movements) and disputes over cow sacrifice, *jhutka* and music before mosques, Fazl-i-Husain came to the conclusion that communal conflict is not religious but economic and political, and the object of the conflict is not to oust "British domination but to secure a position of importance and influence under British domination. In the case of Muslims the desire is to obtain their rights on population basis. In the case of Hindus it is to retain their present position of advantage against any encroachment on it and in the case of Sikhs it is for some loot or other in every affray that may be on. Each community wants to strengthen its position by accentuating the differences between itself and other communities and the tendency is in every way to broaden the gulf between each community and discourage the bridging of such gulfs as already exist." All this stands in the way in the long run of building a united India strong enough to oust the British, and in the immediate future it would ruin the chances of deriving the fullest possible benefit from provincial autonomy granted by the 1935 Reforms Scheme. The autocracy of the Governor had weighted the dice against Indian cabinets and if communal bickering continued or developed further there would be no strong popular Government. Referring to the Punjab, he solicited the co-operation of Hindus and Sikhs and to assure them that they had nothing to [illegible] he pointed out that in the legislature, out of 175 seats, the Muslims could not have more than eighty-nine seats. They were a majority only in name; they were not in a majority in voting strength, nor in public services, nor in local self-government, nor in the matter of grants and honours. He warned Hindus and Sikhs: "There is a very large section of Muslims who do not like the idea of friction and trouble and would be willing to bring this horrible situation to an end, and by agreement settle with non-Muslim communities on the basis of 51:49, thus foregoing for the time being 6 per cent of their heritage. But, remember, this is the view of the moderate Muslims—Muslims of yesterday or perhaps of today—but the far-seeing men are already apprehensive that the Muslims of tomorrow may be unwilling to concede the 6 per cent. They may well ask: Why? and it will not be easy to give them a satisfactory reply." If the Punjab was, therefore, not to be the Ulster of India and was to help in solving the Indian problem, then "those who are coming forward to work under the new constitution should lay aside their dissatisfaction with it for the time being and be ready to work the new constitution for all it is worth. This means that they should be prepared for the time being to forego under the new regime those things which they claim for themselves in the next constitution, but at the same time claim and get every ounce of their rights under the new constitution." Irrespective of caste, class and creed the three communities in the Punjab should constitute themselves into one party on the basis of "a definitely liberal and socialistic programme of work" and work for "the uplift of the Indian masses, pushing forward the cause of the backward people and the backward areas, provision of better facilities for the masses in all departments of Government activities."



THE VICEROY'S HOUSE,
NEW DELHI.

23. 2. 36

My dear Fazli.

Enclosed is a photo which I think will amuse you & sometimes remind you of an old friend. It was taken by Victor Sassoon after lunch on the day you came & clearly shows you & me settling everything for the good of India!

Ever y

Fazl-i-Husain and Lord Willingdon (1936).

was widely distributed on the day following the meeting of the Conference, and on the basis of the views expressed therein negotiations were opened with the Congress, represented by Bhulabhai Desai, the leader of the Congress Assembly Party at the Centre.

The Mahasabha Press looked upon these developments with great suspicion. *Pratap* said that the Muslims were anxious to divide the Hindus on political and economic issues. The *Tribune*[1] warned non-Muslims not to be taken in by Fazl-i-Husain's tactics, and added that the new move was meant to establish Muslim domination under the new constitution. The *Daily Herald* vouched that "Muslim leaders propose to administer the cup of poison with sweet mantras of unity, unity and again unity."[2]

The truth of the matter was that Fazl-i-Husain had always maintained that political parties should be formed on non-communal lines. The Rural Bloc or Zamindara Party of 1921 was reformed in 1923 as the non-communal Unionist Party. In 1930 on his departure from the Punjab he told the people of the Punjab to "bear in mind that this Party (Unionist) should never permit itself to become either a communal party, or a racial party, or a caste party, or a professional party. It should be the unity of faith and belief, the political faith and belief, which should be the determining factor as to who is to be and who is not to be in the Party." In 1931 with reference to the impending election of a President of the Central Assembly, he wrote in his diary: "How to organize a party in the Assembly? My view is that it should be a composite Muslim, European, Hindu and Sikh party to help the backward, agriculturist, industrialist and constitutionalist. I should like to call it Independent National Unionist Party. The material is available and chances of success good, and the only possible obstruction in the way is Government itself. My colleagues may become apprehensive and consider that such a party will be powerful and then a menace to them."[3] The following year he reiterated similar views when he wrote: "I trust

[1] Dated February 18, 1936.
[2] Dated February 19, 1936.
[3] Diary—July 12, 1931.

the Party (Unionist) will continue to be 'Unionist' in the sense that members of all religions and races will find their place in it. Its capacity for serving the province will be considerably reduced if it fails in this important respect."[1] In 1935 several of this friends urged him to form a communal party. Firoz Khan Noon, for example, wrote: "The Muslim public are greatly feeling the need of an organized party which could give a lead to Muslims in the Punjab. I think it is a most opportune time to have a party of this nature. The Punjab National Unionists exist, but it is a party consisting of members belonging to all communities and it will not catch the imagination of the Muslim masses. I shall be grateful to you if you will kindly give a thought to the formation of such a party. It is proposed that the name of the new party should be Muslim Zamindara Party."[2] Fazl-i-Husain refused to accept this advice and insisted on the formation of a non-communal party in the form of the Unionist Party.

In order to promote the policy decided upon in February, a great deal of propaganda was done in the Punjab, U. P. and Delhi. At the next annual session of the All-India Muslim Conference, the views expressed in the Aga Khan's address were reiterated. Soon opposition arose from a certain section of Muslims to the pursuit of a non-communal economic programme. In course of time this became an extremely important issue, because the Muslim League under the leadership of Mr. Jinnah now held out to the Muslims a purely communal programme.

Mr. Jinnah wanted to secure the support of Fazl-i-Husain for his new programme and wrote to him: "At the meeting of the Council of the All-India Muslim League, it was the unanimous wish of everyone that you should be asked to preside over the next session of the League. As soon I suggested your name it was cordially welcomed. I along with many others feel that at this moment no one can give a better lead to the Mussalmans of India than yourself. Of course, it will be a great honour to the League to have you to preside over our deliberations and I am confident that you

[1] Foreword to *Vox Populi Series* No. IV, 1932.
[2] Letter dated August 9, 1935.

will be welcomed universally and I trust that you will accept the call at this moment. I think that you can render the greatest service at this moment and add to your laurels, and I am very anxious that you should give me your authority to announce your name. We want a man of your calibre and experience, and nobody can well, at this critical moment as far as I can see, perform that duty and render that service to the community as you would be able to. I am afraid I have perhaps not expressed adequately how strongly I feel that your presence is necessary mainly and solely in the interests of the community, but I hope you will understand and if you can do, send me a wire 'accept it'. Your refusal will be the greatest misfortune and a terrible disappointment to me personally."[1]

Fazl-i-Husain apprehended that Mr. Jinnah was keen on a programme with which he was not in accord, and declined the offer. Subsequent events confirmed Fazl-i-Husain's apprehensions. The League decided to organize a Central Parliamentary Board to contest the approaching provincial elections. Fazl-i-Husain did not agree with this policy of creating an inter-provincial organization which would fetter provincial initiative in solving the communal problem according to local conditions. Some urban Muslim members of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League under the leadership of Dr. Iqbal offered co-operation to Mr. Jinnah. They received help from certain Muslims who wanted to challenge the leadership of Fazl-i-Husain and to help Sir Sikander Hyat in negotiating terms with urban Hindus and Sikhs.

Fazl-i-Husain was strongly opposed to the activities of the Central Parliamentary Board, on the ground that:—

"(1) Provincial Autonomy means decentralization and, therefore, it is wrong to centralize provincial elections.

"(2) Conditions in each province vary to a very large extent, especially in majority as compared to minority provinces, and it is impossible to have a uniform principle applying to all.

[1] Letter dated January 5, 1936.

"(3) In many provinces Muslims may find it necessary to have non-communal organizations and in that case a Central Muslim agency to conduct Muslim provincial elections would obviously be out of the question. Ordinarily such would be the case in all the Muslim majority provinces. In the case of a province like N.W.F.P. it is foolish to conduct elections centrally.

"(4) The initiative and elasticity needed for such purpose for each province should not be sacrificed for the sake of an All-India leader's aspirations.

"(5) In the case of the Punjab the Muslim majority in the Provincial Assembly is nominal, and it is almost impossible to secure a Muslim majority through a separate control of elections. In the case of the N.W.F.P. it is possible, even probable, that the majority would lose in efficiency and power if it is not permitted to set up a provincial organization of a non-communal nature. What applies to the Punjab applies *mutatis mutandis* to Sind and to a lesser extent to Bengal."[1]

To start with, the Central Parliamentary Board, according to Fazl-i-Husain, consisted of disappointed Congress Muslims and members of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, whose hopes of entering public life through joint electorates were lost. It also included unsuccessful Muslim leaders who during the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms had tried their luck and for some reason or other failed to make their mark on the political life of their provinces. The Ahrars, whose hopes lay in religious leadership and sectarian propaganda, and thereby obtaining an entry into the legislatures, also joined hands. They put their heads together to see whether they could by combination achieve what each of them had failed to secure individually. Fazl-i-Husain was apprehensive that they would disrupt Muslim unity in the Punjab, U. P. and Bengal, and also prevent Muslims in N.W.F.P. and Sind from standing in combination with non-Muslims to give non-communal organizations to their provinces.

[1] *The Civil & Military Gazette*, dated June 7, 1936.

It is significant that Mr. Jinnah, who had hitherto co-operated with the Congress, now opposed co-operation with non-Muslims on an economic programme, and wanted to organize Muslims on purely communal lines. As against this Fazl-i-Husain was consistent throughout his public life, and asked for adequate safeguards for Muslims, and the formation of the non-communal parties based on an economic programme. That is why after the question of safeguards was settled by the passage of the Government of India Act of 1935, he appeared a more nationalistic and progressive politician than Mr. Jinnah.

Fazl-i-Husain wrote to Sir Sikander Hyat: "Jinnah's move in establishing a Central Parliamentary Board of the League was a wrong move, detrimental to Indian Muslims' interests. We have taken the right line. He has misrepresented us and Press propaganda in his support is responsible for his utter failure not having been broadcasted. We refused to join him, Ittehad-i-Millat has refused to join him, Ahrar have been negotiating with him, whether they join him or not their position *qua* us remains the same. Miscellaneous urbanites like Iqbal, Shuja, Taj-ud-Din, Barkat Ali have naturally been trying to make something out of this. Why Jinnah has not done what any ordinary practical man would have done—revive the Provincial League and give it a good start and stress the need of opening its branches in all districts. He has done seemingly nothing except talk and talk and talk. He apparently believed that he was so clever that he will get people to agree to become his nominees and serve on the Central Board and then they will be responsible for running the elections in the province. So the scheme is purely a paper one."[1]

Sir Sikander Hyat ostensibly agreed, and replied: "I have asked Ahmadyar to convey to Jinnah to live up to his professed views that he wants Muslims to be one united body and to speak with one voice both to the Congress and the British. His activities during the past few weeks, judging from the Press reports, are contrary to his professions. I have also asked Ahmadyar to strongly press on him the advisability of keeping his finger out of the Punjab pie. If he

[1] Letter dated May 6, 1936.

meddles he would only be encouraging fissiparous tendencies already palpably discernible in a section of Punjab Muslims and might burn his fingers; and in any case we cannot possibly allow provincial autonomy to be tampered with in any sphere and by anybody, be he a nominee of the powers who have given us this autonomy, or a President of the Muslim League, or any other association or body."[1]

Sir Shafaat Ahmad described the situation in the United Provinces: "Jinnah is creating something of an excitement here, and the *Statesman* seems to have been swept off its feet. Developments in the U. P. in connection with Jinnah's Parliamentary Board; Chhattari misled the meeting at Aligarh and sent up names for Jinnah's Board. When the Governor of U. P. came to know of it he was furious and according to Sir J. P. Srivastava, the Minister, who met me here yesterday, said: 'There are two very strong men who have had the courage to express their opinions and think clearly. One is Fazl-i-Husain in the Punjab and the other is Shafaat in U. P.' Srivastava told me that this false step on Chhattari's part has shattered his prestige. Chhattari was profuse in his apologies and was frightened of the developments. He is calling another meeting at Aligarh to reconsider the decision of the previous Aligarh meeting. I am going down to Aligarh on June 7th to give a decent burial to Jinnah's scheme."[2] The Nawab of Chhattari retracted and dissociated himself from his new affiliations. A meeting of the U. P. Muslims was called to devise ways and means to counteract Jinnah's Parliamentary Board. The Rajas of Salempur and Mahmudabad who had offered to co-operate with Mr. Jinnah now resumed their connections with the National Agriculturist Party. This left only U. P. Congress Muslims, an insignificant minority, to side with Mr. Jinnah.

In the Punjab Fazl-i-Husain wanted no interference in provincial politics by the All-India Muslim League. During his visit to Lahore to canvass support for his Parliamentary Board, Mr. Jinnah said to Raja Narendra Nath: "Fazli thinks he carries the Punjab in his pocket. Raja Sahib, I am going to smash Fazli." In reply Raja Narendra Nath said: "You

[1] Letter dated May 6, 1936.

[2] Letter dated May 29, 1936, to Fazl-i-Husain.

must be very strong then!" Before Mr. Jinnah left Lahore he said: "I shall never come to the Punjab again. It is such a hopeless place." Muhammad Noman, the Muslim League chronicler, has described how, "during his stay in Lahore he (Mr. Jinnah) tried his level best to persuade Sir Fazl-i-Husain and his Unionist Party to join the Muslim League.... and to convert Sir Fazl-i-Husain's party to his point of view but the differences between the two were so divergent that the talks bore no fruit. Mr. Jinnah frankly wanted a Muslim party, while Sir Fazl-i-Husain was opposed to give his Party a communal label and preferred to call it by the high-sounding name of the Punjab Unionist Party and keep up a purely deceptive appearance."[1]

Fazl-i-Husain wrote to the Aga Khan: "The situation is something like this. Since last April the Unionist Party has been reorganized and a Unionist political organization of a non-communal type has been set going throughout the Punjab. We have been able to collect subscriptions for our need and the headquarters' organization is functioning very well....Jinnah has blundered into the arena very much to our prejudice. He has not been able to obtain any support from any section of the Unionists. Even the Ittehad-i-Millat, i.e. the extremist section of the Muslims, has refused to co-operate with him and have withdrawn from his central board on which he had put their representative. So he is left with Ahrars and a few disgruntled unsuccessful moderate leaders of the Montague Reforms period. The combination is a very ill-assorted one and is not likely to work very much, but Jinnah's interference and all sorts of silly promises as to large funds being available from Bombay millionaires and from the Maharaja of Mahmudabad has made our task rather difficult, because the Press in general and the vernacular Press in particular is in an impecunious condition and is always anxious to get some help in view of the elections coming on, and this Parliamentary Board of Jinnah coming into being and all sorts of adventurers and others coming into field, their desire to make money out of as many people as they can has become very acute. This is what has made it very necessary to seek your help in these extra-

[1] Mohammad Noman: *Muslim India*, 1942, p. 330.

ordinary circumstances. You know perfectly well that the Punjab is the key of the Indian Muslim politics because of the strong attitude we have taken. Sind is following in our footsteps, the North-West Frontier Province is doing the same and to a minor extent Bengal and U. P. are also coming into line. Thus Jinnah's Parliamentary Board is already broken up. The Bihar minister has already resigned. In Madras Muslims have become vocal and challenge the representative character of the two or three Congress Muslims Jinnah had put on his board. The way it is proposed to utilize funds is to give monthly subsidies to vernacular papers, which definitely are or would become Party papers. In the subsidy being monthly full value is thus necessarily assured. The second way in which money is to be utilized is to have a few very good well-informed journalists—English and vernacular—writing for the Press and the organization will see that their contributions are accepted. Thirdly, publication of pamphlets and leaflets, and lastly, communications in the nature of summaries of local news to be sent to England."[1] In reply the Aga Khan promised to send Rs. 20,000 and sent half at once.[2] The Muslim League was effectively counteracted. Several urban League groups were captured one after the other. The League was urged to define its creed and to put forward its manifesto, both of which were examined critically and criticized in the Press.

A week before his death in July 1936, Fazl-i-Husain was able to say: "Jinnah's Central Parliamentary Board is finished and this was to be expected. In the Punjab, not only did the Unionists frankly inform him that his move was wrong and detrimental to the best interests of Muslim provinces, but the withdrawal of Maulana Zafar Ali Khan and the Ittehad-i-Millat left the Board practically with Ahrars and they are in opposition to all other parties in the Punjab. Will the Ahrars lose their identity and merge themselves into the League? Very unlikely. Thus the Central Parlia-

[1] Letter dated June 22, 1936.

[2] On July 6, 1936, the Aga Khan wrote to Fazl-i-Husain: "My agents have sent you the first part of my grant, (i.e. Rs. 10,000), due to my horse *Mahmud* winning the Derby, otherwise I should not have been able financially to so help you. The second part I will send at the end of August or early September from my Bombay office."

mentary Board, so far as the Punjab is concerned, does not exist. N.W.F. Province and Sind have definitely decided to constitute Unionist Parties after the pattern of the Punjab Unionist Party and Bengal, specially Eastern Bengal, has also decided to follow them. One might have thought that the minority provinces would follow Jinnah's League, but in the United Provinces we find the old cleavage—Muslim U. P. *versus* Unity Board of Pandit Malaviya alliance fame and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema of Delhi of the Congress fame. Men who count are not in it. However, no harm is done. Mr. Jinnah is wiser by the experience gained. The Punjab has learnt a lesson not to be gushing to anyone in future and not to let its heart run away with its head." Fazl-i-Husain predicted correctly, the League and the Ahrars soon parted company.

As the Ahrars were the chief opponents of Fazl-i-Husain, they deserve closer examination. In 1931 a small section of Muslims led by Chaudhri Afzal Haq, most of them remnants of the Khalafatists, along with some urban Muslims who resented the predominance of rural influence, and some former Muslim Congressmen, returned to the political field by organizing the Majlis-i-Ahrar. They had no programme, no organization and no policy, and lived from day to day. The first occasion for their prominence was the alleged grievances of Muslim students against the Principal of MacLagan Engineering College of Lahore and the second occasion was provided by the Quetta Earthquake of 1932. Next came the Muslim agitation against the State of Kashmir. With the publication of the Kashmir Government's proposals for constitutional reforms the agitation subsided and a new war cry had to be discovered.

Throughout 1933-4 the Ahrars were in financial difficulties and tried to agitate against the military operations in the N.W.F.P., but failed miserably. Finally, in 1934, in order to win favour with some orthodox Muslims, they became extreme sectarians, and started an agitation against the Ahmadis. The occasion for a fierce anti-Ahmadi agitation was provided by the appointment of Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan as Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council on the retirement of Fazl-i-Husain. Since Fazl-i-Husain was known

to have been instrumental in securing the officiating vacancy for Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan in 1932, it was believed that he was responsible for getting him nominated as his successor as well. The virulent attacks of Syed Ataullah Shah Bokhari and Maulana Zafar Ali in the *Zamindar*, *Weekly Mail* and *Mujahid* were, therefore, dircted as much against Fazl-i-Husain as against Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan. He was strongly criticized for creating an Ahmadi *imperium in imperio*,[1] and at the same time it was asked why Dr. Iqbal was not appointed member of the Viceroy's Council.[2] Dr. Iqbal himself joined the chorus and said that the Ahmadiya movement weakened Muslim solidarity, which was already imperilled by the rural-urban cleavage.[3] Fazl-i-Husain refuted the charge that he was disrupting the unity of Muslims, and in fact ensured by constant consultations with the head of the Ahmadiya community that during the forthcoming elections no candidate would be put up on the basis of an Ahmadiya political party, and that elections would be run on strictly non-sectarian party lines. The Ahmadis as a community could, of course, come to an understanding with the particular party to which they were to give their support through the Nazir Amur-i-Ama at Qadian. Thus Pir Akbar Ali and Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan, and later Chaudhri Asadulla Khan, were members of the Unionist Party and were elected as such.

[1] Fazl-i-Husain was not unmindful of the likely dangers of the appointment of Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan and wrote to him: "It (agitation) is based on what you call the score of religious doctrine, but the moving spirit is that this unity of doctrine with other Ahmadis makes one partial to them and helps them against non-Ahmadi Muslims. They actually stated firstly that a number of such men were appointed in 1932, though temporarily. Secondly, that the position is abused by Ahmadi preachers in doing propaganda amongst Muslims for converting Muslims to Ahmadi creed on account of this position; thirdly, that it gives a general prestige to a sect which one should try to suppress rather than encourage, i.e. for instance, your visit to Qadian in 1932. In fact, they have turned their attention to me saying that having been for a long time in office has made me irresponsible to Muslim opinion and that I have assumed dictatorial attitude. However, I believe decision (about your appointment) has been arrived at, but I am, by no means, sure that the opposition will die down on the announcement being made. It will revive a bit. I will see what can be done to counteract that revival. Later it will be for you to consider what steps are necessary to reassure the Muslims on the points mentioned above and on some others." (Letter dated September 24, 1934.)

[2] *The Weekly Mail*, dated September 17, 1934.

[3] *The Weekly Mail*, dated May 27, 1935.

The Ahrars, however, declared that they would oppose Fazl-i-Husain in every possible way in the forthcoming elections, and decided to co-operate with Mr. Jinnah's Parliamentary Board provided the Ahmadis were excluded from the League. The Ahrar-League combination was likely to prove embarrassing to the Unionist Party and it was repeatedly suggested to Fazl-i-Husain that he should take a stand against the Ahmadis, and thereby avoid popular criticism and take the wind out of the sails of the Ahrar agitation against him. But Fazl-i-Husain refused to give up his principles for the sake of immediate political advantage, and taking a long term view of Muslim politics said: "If by partiality to Mirzais is meant that I give preference to a Mirzai over a non-Mirzai merely because he is a Mirzai, then this is not only incorrect but a gross misrepresentation. I, however, consider that to deprive any man of his rights or not to give him a chance to render some service which he is capable of discharging well merely because he is a Mirzai is to be unjust. I am strongly opposed to importing sectarian considerations to exclude any one from being considered for an appointment. This is fatal to the solidarity of Islam and is likely to have a very disruptive effect. It is a thing to be discouraged.. If we start these controversies once more, we will lose all that we have gained in the political field."[1]

It was generally given out by interested persons that Fazl-i-Husain did not give fair opportunities to urban Muslims, lest the more capable among them became his rivals in leadership,[2] and, therefore, the only alternative for urban Muslims was to join rival organisations. They complained

[1] Letter dated August 31, 1934, to Maulvi Mazhar-ud-Din.

[2] In 1935, Dr. Iqbal, in his speech at the anniversary of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam, said : "It is really unfortunate that this rural-urban question should have received the support of Sir Fazl-i-Husain who obtained power in the first instance, not as a rural leader but as a Muslim leader of the province, but unfortunately clung to his power by accentuating rural-urban differences. In this way, he secured as his colleagues some third-class men with no title to Government power and the prestige and authority which the possession of such offices as ministerships secure, but who on that very account, viz. their mediocrity, look up to him as a superman. Some of the authorities also encouraged this policy as in this way they were able to break the force of the Reforms of 1919. The result of these tendencies has been that so far as the Muslims are concerned, real leadership has stood at a distance while the thoroughly incompetent 'political adventurer' has come into the limelight."

in the words of Malik Barkat Ali as follows: "You said that the province had lost a great deal in its self-respect and that the first question confronting any public man was how to restore to the province the self-respect it has lost. No bitter truth could be so beautifully and aptly expressed. May I venture to add that the guilt of this crime against the province rests on the shoulders of the Unionist Party that you left to take charge of the affairs of the province after you had gone to Delhi. They were the Party in power and the grave responsibility of playing with and bartering away the self-respect of the province, rests solely with them and them alone. You have chosen the same Party as your instrument. It may be that you can control the situation, but for how long? After you, who will carry out your work? Will it be the Noons and the Sikanders? It is a pain to us that some of these creatures of yours should actually be conspiring against you and plotting and and cajoling with Hindus to overthrow you. The *Eastern Times* announces that Sir Sikander has accepted your leadership. But the *Tribune* tells another tale. Who is this Sir Sikander? Mian Sahib, you should open your eyes and rally to yourself the talent of the province, those whom you cast out and who have been passing their time in the wilderness. It is only the talent of the province that can face an Imperialist Governor. You belonged to that circle of Talent. The province gained in self-respect while you were at the helm. But what of your successors, and yet you have been full of praises for their 'magnificent work'? We expect of you to help Talent coming back into its own. These Sikanders and Noons must disappear, the sooner they are relegated to the back places they deserve, the better. The responsibility for this situation is yours...The Sikanders and the Noons and the rural leaders—the favourites of the bureaucracy—can be washed away in no time; you are their prop and mainstay. This is the grievance of the Muslims against you. Are you aware of it? If not, I have taken the liberty of appraising you with it so that it may not be said that no friend opened his heart to you. You have not been fair to us. We have kept up our regard and

esteem for you, and have virtually retired from the field of public service. But what youthful heart is there which does not pine at the meagerness of the opportunity to serve and advance his province under the awful conditions that your leadership have brought about? Iqbal is finished; poor Shah Nawaz is past time; Shuja gone; the only ones that thrive are the Sikanders and the Firozes and Sir Shahab; who else can aspire at all under the conditions and under the terrible handicaps that exist today. Thanks to your Unionist Party and its cult, despite all creeds and programmes."[1]

The truth was that Fazl-i-Husain was anxious that every capable Muslim should have an opportunity to take his rightful place among the leaders of his community, and those who possessed merit, irrespective of whether they were urban or rural Muslims, had his full support. Thus Sir Abdul Qadir, a non-agriculturist and an urbanite, was elected President of the Council in 1924 with the support of Fazl-i-Husain, who also secured his appointment as an officiating minister in 1925 and as a Member of the Council of the Secretary of State in 1934. In the same way, he supported Khalifa Shuja-ud-Din for appointment as Assistant Legal Remembrancer in spite of the strong requests of his so-called 'rural friends,' who wanted one of their relations to be appointed, and later secured his nomination to the Joint Select Committee. If Khalifa Shuja-ud-Din did not achieve more it was on account of his own limitations. Dr. Muhamad Alam, Malik Barkat Ali and Maulana Zafar Ali Khan had their own shortcomings which stood in the way of their progress in the official and the political world.

The aim of Fazl-i-Husain was that there should be no one ruling class, but that leaders should arise from among the common people and not be confined to the aristocracy, the upper middle and the middle classes. The critics of Fazl-i-Husain, on the other hand, said that not only was his choice of men poor but he also ensured that no capable Muslim should be allowed to rise for fear that he may become a rival to him. Fazl-i-Husain argued that he chose

[1] Letter dated April 4, 1936.

the best, not from one but from every point of view, and if the persons he chose did not turn out to be front rank men, it was not his error of judgment but the fault lay in the material at his disposal. To this extent Fazl-i-Husain was right, because he had sufficient confidence in himself not to be afraid of rivals in the Punjab. There is, however, this to be admitted that in spite of the existence of the Unionist Party for over twelve years Fazl-i-Husain found the Party towards the end destitute of first rate Muslim leaders. This was due not to any lack of consistent efforts on the part of Fazl-i-Husain to train younger men, because he was constantly trying to do so, but to the fact that the existing franchise narrowed the scope of the legislature to the landed gentry, and the landlords proved themselves devoid of talent and capacity for leadership. The Unionist Party, before its reorganization in 1935, was not a mass organization of the small peasant proprietor (though it did a great deal for him)—who is the dominant feature of the economic life of the Punjab—it was a Party of the landed gentry, who sat in the legislature and who dominated the political life of the districts. They were all conservative, most of them educationally backward, and practically all of them without any political tradition or aptitude. The Unionist Party was not a party of the masses, though its ultimate appeal rested with them; there was no scope for leaders to rise from among the common people. Fazl-i-Husain was acutely conscious of this weakness and in 1936, while reorganizing the Party, took pains to make it a mass organization which would bring forth in time talent to the top. After Fazl-i-Husain's death the Party did not develop as he had envisaged it, and its leadership continued to suffer from the same weakness which characterized its past.

As the criticism against Fazl-i-Husain largely arose on account of Dr. Iqbal the latter's career deserves special mention, because in fact Fazl-i-Husain repeatedly tried to help him, but Dr. Iqbal failed to utilize the opportunities offered to him. In 1924 Fazl-i-Husain urged Sir Malcolm Hailey to raise Dr. Iqbal to the Bench, but while the case was under consideration Dr. Iqbal alienated the sympathies

of officials by unrestrained criticism of Government. In 1927 it was proposed to send a Muslim Deputation to England to place before the Secretary of State the Muslim demands for the forthcoming Reforms. Fazl-i-Husain asked Dr. Iqbal to lead the Deputation, and collected Rs. 3,000 for the purpose. This would have assured a first class political career for Dr. Iqbal, but he refused to go as it would have involved an expenditure of an extra few thousand rupees. Instead Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan agreed to go, and assured a bright future for himself. This did not deter Fazl-i-Husain from making further efforts to help Dr. Iqbal and he proposed that on the termination of the term of Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din as President of the Council, Dr. Iqbal should be elected President with the support of the Unionist Party. Dr. Iqbal, however, alienated the sympathies of the Party by criticising their policy and attacking them severely in the Press, with the result that the majority of the Unionists refused to accept him as a candidate and Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din was re-elected as President. In 1931, at the instance of Fazl-i-Husain, the Viceroy nominated Dr. Iqbal to the second Round Table Conference. While attending the Conference Dr. Iqbal quarrelled with Sir Akbar Hydari, a prominent member of the Muslim Delegation, and this stood in the way of his success as a member of the Delegation. On his return to India he severely criticised the work of the Muslim Delegation, a criticism greatly resented by the Secretary of State because it belittled the proceedings of the Conference. The following year Fazl-i-Husain urged that Dr. Iqbal be sent again to the Round Table Conference, or alternatively should serve on the Federal Structure Committee or be sent as a member of the Indian Delegation to the League of Nations. In view of the previous year's experience it was reluctantly agreed to send Dr. Iqbal to the Round Table Conference. While the Conference was in progress he resigned and returned to India, and denounced the British Government in the strongest possible terms in his address to the Muslim League at Allahabad. It was, therefore, not surprising that in spite of the repeated requests from Fazl-

i-Husain the Viceroy refused to appoint Dr. Iqbal as a member of the Public Services Commission.[1] But nothing could deter Fazl-i-Husain from trying to help Dr. Iqbal again, and he recommended that he might be considered for appointment as Agent to South Africa.

Having failed to secure a Government appointment for Dr. Iqbal Fazl-i-Husain approached the Nizam of Hyderabad to help Dr. Iqbal. In reply Sir Akbar Hydari wrote: "In reply to a wire to Iqbal asking him to wire definite extent and form of help, he has replied: 'Five months work press platform interviews party of five rough estimate sixty thousand.' Do you think that I can ask my Committee and Government to shoulder such heavy expenditure?"[2] Fazl-i-Husain thereupon while suggesting some modification as to the amount to be paid wrote: "I think any assistance given to Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal to take two or three good men with him and to give interviews and lectures, etc. will be most beneficial to the State as well as to Indian Muslims. I should like Hyderabad to accept the suggestion."[3] Dr. Iqbal, however, insisted on his expensive proposal and it failed. A similar effort was made three years later, when Fazl-i-Husain wrote to Mian Amir-ud-Din: "How is Iqbal? Sometime ago I heard he was not keeping well and that he was in some financial difficulties. I shall be glad if you will let me know very confidentially the exact position. I have been a great admirer of his since college days. I once more like to make an effort to help him if I knew exactly how he stood at present in the matter of health and finances and the real practice, if any, he has at present."[4]

Mian Amir-ud-Din replied that Dr. Iqbal had ceased to practise in 1931. His health was poor and so were his finances and he was rapidly losing his voice. He suggested that if a series of lectures could be arranged at Hyderabad and a substantial fee fixed, it would help him considerably.[5] Fazl-i-Husain prepared a scheme for the delivery of six

[1] Diary—November 25, 1931.
[2] Letter dated June 25, 1931.
[3] Letter dated July 2, 1931, to Sir Ibrahim Rahimtullah.
[4] Letter dated May 2, 1934.
[5] Letter dated June 23, 1934.

lectures on 'Modern Islamic Thought' for a sum of Rs. 10,000 but the Nizam's Government refused to agree to the terms proposed by Dr. Iqbal and negotiations failed again. The truth of the matter was that Dr. Iqbal was not a politician; he was a political philospher. He was an idealist, and could not understand that politics was a game of compromise. He failed to get office or to become a leader because he was more of a poet and a thinker than a man of affairs.

## CHAPTER XX

## *REORGANIZATION OF THE UNIONIST PARTY*

*(continued)*

THE urban Muslim discontent against Fazl-i-Husain was confined to a few though highly vocal persons, who were mostly dissatisfied for personal reasons. That they failed is patent from the fact that in the Punjab Assembly elections held shortly after Fazl-i-Husain's death only two Muslim League and two Ahrar candidates succeeded in getting themselves elected. Before the first sitting of the Assembly, one of the two successful Muslim League candidates joined the Unionist Party. However, at the time among the Muslims in the Punjab there were three groups, each striving to gain power under the new constitution. Fazl-i-Husain and the Unionists formed the largest group; they were opposed by the League Parliamentary Board on the one hand, and by Sir Sikandar Hyat and his partisans supported by Urban Hindus and Sikhs on the other.[1]

Soon after Fazl-i-Husain's retirement from the Government of India the *Star* gave out that Sir Sikander had decided to contest the next elections, and would probably struggle for the Chief Ministership.[2] As this meant difficulties with the Reserve Bank, Sir Sikander contradicted the news.[3] Fazl-i-Husain felt apprehensive at the prospect of rivalry between himself and one of his followers and when some further efforts at organizing an opposition came to his notice he wrote to Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din: "People, including relations and connections are so selfish, so petty.

[1] *Roy's Weekly*, dated June 3, 1935.

[2] Dated April 25, 1935.

[3] Statement dated May 29, 1935.

so jealous, so ungrateful that it is heartbreaking and even disgusting. One has to be patient and not mind all the treacheries. Life now consists in the performance of one's duty to wind up."[1]

Fazl-i-Husain's health was bad, and although he was constantly working to complete the preliminary work of the reorganization of the Party, a feeling of lassitude and lack of energy made it difficult for him to lead the Party actively. He wrote to Nawab Muzaffar Khan: "I think it would help everybody if leading Muslims in the Punjab seriously take up the possibility of leadership in the future on the assumption that my health is not good enough to permit my returning to public life and that Sikander on account of his commitments elsewhere is not available. Who are the likely persons under these circumstanres to constitute the Muslim section of the Cabinet and who will be their leader? Will there be sufficient talent to enable them to be the predominant partners in the Cabinet? Who are the likely persons amongst the non-Muslims to be the members of the reformed Cabinet? I have asked friends to tackle these questions seriously and not indulge in platitudes about my being absolutely necessary and so on. I very much appreciate these compliments, but I want my friends to put aside compliments for the time being and to proceed to tackle this problem in a businesslike fashion."[2] He wrote in a similar strain to Sir Sikander, who replied: "Unless you are prepared to take the lead and get into harness again I am afraid the Muslims will go under for ever from the very start. If you come forward I can assure you once again that there will be no dearth of reliable and efficient lieutenants to assist you in your work. What they need is a sound leader and clear and definite advice. The rest they can be depended upon to do themselves. The present position is that they are like a railway carriage without an engine. I do hope and earnestly wish that you will be able to change your mind on mature thought."[3]

[1] Dated June 14, 1935.

[2] Letter dated August 29, 1935.

[3] Letter dated September 23, 1935.

This reassured Fazl-i-Husain, but he was pained to learn from Colonel Harper-Nelson, his physician, that Nawab Muzaffar Khan was making confidential enquiries about his health and how long he was likely to live. He at once asked Sir Sikander if he had instituted these enquiries, but the latter denied it.[1] Meanwhile the Shahidgunj agitation caused the political situation in the province to grow from bad to worse, and Fazl-i-Husain wrote in his diary: "Lahore riots again. This time started by Sikhs to take their revenge. For the last four days this has been preying upon my mind, and I came to a decision to devote the little that is left of my energy to this work even if it costs me my life. The scheme that was evolved was this: (1) Firoz to resign forthwith and His Excellency to put me in, then I resign by the end of February and His Excellency to put Firoz in, and then (2) Muzaffar goes on three months' leave and His Excellency to put me in for the period of leave. I called Firoz and asked him—he agreed, then I called Muzaffar and he agreed, then I asked His Excellency's Private Secretary for an interview and it was fixed for this afternoon. Muzaffar came soon after breakfast and told me that it would be best to treat his agreement as suspended, pending Sikander's views who must be consulted. I said, certainly. So when I saw His Excellency in the afternoon we talked about the situation generally and not about this scheme."[2]

Fazl-i-Husain was so deeply mortified by Nawab Muzaffar Khan's distrust and Sir Sikander's reactions to his proposal that his thoughts verged on suicide. Some days later he wrote to Sir Sikander: "I am most grateful to you for yours of the 7th, though your assumptions are not well-founded, and your views I find I cannot subscribe to. The sad occurrences at Lahore on the 30th November and afterwards upset me to the extent that I attempted to commit suicide; providence sent you to save me from myself. After a few days the acuteness of feeling subsided, and I began to feel unhappy over my offer realising that however willing the

[1] Letter dated November 27, 1935 from Sir Sikander Hyat Khan.
[2] Diary—December 4, 1935.

soul may be the body was most obdurate and hopeless. While in this predicament, I wanted to go to my two friends and withdraw my offer but a sense of false shame stood in the way. It was at this juncture that your letter came and released me from all responsibility...With best wishes and lots of thanks for such helpful intercession."[1] A few days later he recorded in his diary: "Sikander says he will come to Lahore during Christmas week and then talk matters over.[2] I have written to him by return of post thanking him for saving me from the evil consequences of my attempted suicide. I have called Firoz and Muzaffar and I am going to tell them that my offer is off. My going to Batala on the 7th and returning yesterday was more valuable experience—showed how weak I was and how completely and hopelessly unfit to make a sustained effort for even a short while."[3]

Very soon what were indirect hints turned into an open declaration, and the *Daily Herald* wrote: "Hindus and Sikhs have suffered so much in recent years, owing to his pro-Muslim policy that to be known as a friend of Sir Fazl-i-Husain is a matter of discredit. If he has no personal ambition for the Chief Ministership and only wants his province to prosper and progress he will do well to leave the field clear for the time being at least for Sir Sikander Hyat, Nawab Muzaffar Khan, Sir Shahab-ud-Din, Ahmadyar Khan Daultana, Sardar Habibullah and the Ahrars to try to bridge the gulf that separates the Muslims and non-Muslims....Hindu and Sikh leaders can be found more easily to work in co-operation with them."[4]

[1] Letter dated December 9, 1935.

[2] "During Christmas holidays, Sikander came to see me, once alone, once with Shahab-ud-Din. His position was—I should announce that I am ready to work the reforms and that I should be the Chief Minister, and that he would resign from the Reserve Bank, if I wanted him for my cabinet, and thinks, if I desired, he could come even in April 1936. I told him that my health did not permit my doing so and that he should decide for himself whether to resign or not? Shahab-ud-Din is not committed to Firoz or Sikander but in case there were a conflict between Sikander and Firoz, he would side with Sikander, and if it were between Muzaffar and Firoz, he would side with Firoz i.e. on the winning side but would no doubt prefer to supplant them both." (Diary—January 14, 1936.)

[3] Diary—December 14. 1935.

[4] Dated January 27, 1936.

Sardar Habibullah at once published a contradiction but as regards the others the intrigue deepened when the *Times of India* wrote: "The group which was once led by Sir Sikander is now working under the direction of Ahmadyar Khan Daultana, who commands the largest backing in the present Council. It expects that in the next Council it will be in a clear majority over all the others. Some Hindu Sabhaites and independents have definitely joined this group."[1]

When Fazl-i-Husain asked Ahmadyar Khan Daultana to publish a contradiction, he agreed but Sir Sikander wrote: "I think it would be far more graceful and effective, if a statement to the Press emanated from you."[2] Fazl-i-Husain while refusing to do so said: "You wish me to issue a statement that the reports in the public Press as to the want of loyalty of some of the members of my Party are incorrect. I have never pressed myself forward as Leader. I have never claimed to be in the exalted position of the leader who has any wonderful claim to the allegiance of all those associated with his work. In fact, it has been my desire to care more for work than for personal advertisement and even now what I aim at is that the right thoughts, principles and programmes be formulated and executed, does not matter by whom; and personal matters should be only of secondary importance. I mean, nature being what it is, it is impossible for me to eradicate personal jealousy amongst my colleagues or amongst those who in the future will have to carry out our programme. My health, no doubt, is better than it was, but it is not yet good enough for the great responsibility involved in organizing a party in the Punjab. Those who are opposed to the programme which is formulated for our Party and approved by the Party, will no doubt form the opposition; but then party-form of Government would be meaningless if there was no opposition."[3]

In the meantime the *Tribune* maintained that "Sir Sikander expressed his readiness to his non-Muslim friends

[1] Dated February 10, 1936.

[2] Letter dated February 15, 1936.

[3] Letter dated February 23, 1936.

to take a leading part in the formation of the future provincial cabinet," and that non-Muslims were offering their support to Sir Sikander in return for "a less aggressively communal policy than that of Sir Fazl-i-Husain."[1] When Sir Sikander came to Lahore towards the end of March, an understanding was arrived at and the following statement was issued by Fazl-i-Husain with his concurrence: "Leading Hindu and Sikh politicians approached Sir Sikander Hyat with offer of full and strong support in case he decided to offer himself for Chief Ministership under the Reforms. Sir Sikander Hyat is said to have expressed his thanks and gratitude to the Hindu-Sikh leaders for their generous offer but expressed his inability to accede to their request as he was now of the same views which he entertained before and to which he had given expression more than once that he felt that the nature of the new reforms and condition of the existing atmosphere were such that the experience and knowledge and the political gifts of the leader of the Unionists, Mian Fazl-i-Husain, should be utilized and that he would carry on his policy and execute such schemes in pursuance of that policy as he may prepare. He expressed his adherence to the creed recently published in the public Press and approved by the Unionist Party and offered that creed to Hindu and Sikh leaders on the basis of which they could join his Party and all work together happily. He is said to have reported these methods to his chief who expressed his satisfaction with this and subject to his health permitting promised to do what he could in leading them in the best interests of the province. He assured Sir Sikander Hyat that his offer to Hindu and Sikh leaders was fully endorsed by him."[2]

Sir Sikander subsequently felt dissatisfied as this statement definitely assigned to him a subordinate role. Mir Maqbool and Ahmadyar Khan Daultana now proposed to issue a statement, on behalf of Sir Sikander, on these lines. The object of Sir Sikander's conversations with his Sikh and Hindu friends, it said, was to explore the possibility,

[1] *The Tribune*, dated April 5, 1936.
[2] *The Tribune*, dated April 2, 1936.

and encourage the formation of a political party non-communal and non-sectarian in programme, and free from colour bias. He found their attitude most helpful and encouraging. On the other side, Fazl-i-Husain welcomed the idea of combining all interests, Muslim and non-Muslim, agriculturist and non-agriculturist, rural and urban, in a party based on political affinities as distinguished from communal or class considerations. In view of the encouraging response from all sides, and on the assurance that it would be organized in accordance with these principles, Sir Sikander asked his friends to assist whole-heartedly in the work of organizing this party.

Fazl-i-Husain commented: "I have gone through the document. I do not believe Sikander could have seen it and approved of it. It is probably Mir Maqbool's production." He had, he explained, made it clear to Sir Sikander that if his policy was to rebel from the Party (because, the Party wanted Fazl-i-Husain as its leader) and form alliances with non-Muslims, he would not have it, but would stand out, and advise the Party to give its support to Sir Sikander so that he might not have recourse to such a device. Sir Sikander, in return, had professed abhorrence of any such device, and assured Fazl-i-Husain that apart from the moral aspect of it, even politically and from a selfish point of view, it would be suicidal for him; he had told his Hindu and Sikh friends of this aspect of the matter and they had to confess the correctness of his view. He (Fazl-i-Husain) was even now prepared to stand out and let others carry on the work as they deemed fit; he had really no urge and no ambition in the matter, and would stand out, though only with great regret. He would feel compelled to adopt this course, and would hold Sir Sikander mainly responsible for forcing the decision on him.[1]

Thereupon Ahmadyar Khan Daultan explained: "I am distressed to hear what happened yesterday and had a sleepless night. Let me assure you that the draft was not of Sikander's and that it should not have been given to you, and that no one else besides Maqbool and myself knew of it. I only consulted a friend, who is not in politics, and

[1] Letter dated May 7, 1936.

whose opinion I value. He is like a brother to me. I will see that Sikander phones you up on Sunday. For God's sake do not disturb yourself for a second. Sikander will behave like a son to you."[1] Sir Sikander was irritated, and replied: "Your analytical comments on my statement, which I sent through Maqbool, are so uncharitable, farfetched and unjustified, that I am compelled, though reluctantly, to enter a protest. I, therefore, propose writing to you frankly and in some detail, not merely to vindicate my own position, which is only a secondary consideration, but also to assure you of the bonafides of Maqbool and others who have been loyally working for you and the Party. The statement under reference was drafted by me here, and was sent to Maqbool with the request that it should be shown to you for making any modifications which you may consider necessary, and that thereafter it should be issued with an explanatory note, which might leave no doubt regarding our relations and eliminate the possibility of my statement being misunderstood . . . . This being my position, I cannot, for the life of me, understand what made you put such an uncharitable interpretation on my draft statement. Had it been my intention to issue the statement with the motives, which you seem to have unjustly ascribed to me, you would have been the last person to whom I would send it for approval and revision. This fact alone is sufficient to prove my bonafides; moreover, if I had any sinister motives I would hardly ask Maqbool and Ahmadyar, in the same letter in which I sent them my draft statement, to see Raja Narendra Nath also in order to invoke his good offices for restoring the chances of his party and the Unionists working together, which existed prior to the release of your hurried, and, if I may repeat what I said before, unfortunate statement. That statement, I am given to understand, had seriously impaired the chances of non-agriculturist Hindus joining hands with the Unionist Party, and my utility in bringing them together. Moreover, you will, I trust, admit that I would have been perfectly justified, on your own precedent, in issuing my statement without even showing it

[1] Letter dated May 8, 1936.

to you. You may be aware that there are people who have been attributing uncharitable motives to you for issuing that hurried statement. They even go so far as to allege that the statement was deliberately designed to alienate from me the goodwill of my Hindu and Sikh friends. . . ."[1]

Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din called this letter "a combination of explanation and submission, a collection of hot and cold, a compound of egotism and humiliation or a mixture of vanity and sincerity. So you can interpret it unfavourably or favourably according to your mental inclination. But, while favourable interpretation will mean unity, solidarity and strength of the Muslim Punjab, unfavourable interpretation shall mean discord, destruction and chaos."[2] Ahmadyar Khan Daultana explained: "I do not wish to say as to my *Karguzari* and God knows how Sikander was in the feeling of the deep distress. . . .He had a grievance and I am sure that this letter has made his breast clean and clear. I now request you, as a son requests his father, to take it in the best light and send a suitable reply to Sikandar whose feelings towards you are that of a younger brother to an elder brother."[3]

Fazl-i-Husain replied to Sir Sikandar: "Yours of the 13th reached me today. I am very grateful to you for your generous sentiments and forbearance, but you and your friends found my leadership in the matter of the statement issued on the 1st April 1930 defective, especially in the matter of your position in the Party and your statement in reply to the Hindu offer to you. As soon as I came to know of it, I offered to make matters clear as I understand. Your true friends expressed complete satisfaction, but you were not and are not satisfied. From 1st April to 8th May I have slaved for the Party but you will be the chief beneficiary. I have failed to return your confidence and gladly retire from leadership and from public and political life, so you should resign at once and assume leadership and need apprehend no trouble of any kind from me. As I will have abandoned politics completely there will be no difficulty in my agreeing

[1] Letter dated May 13, 1936.
[2] Letter dated May 17, 1936.
[3] Letter dated May 17, 1936.

to any statement you will issue, only you can have no objection to my explaining to the public the circumstances which led to my decision. I wish you, your friends and the Party every success."[1]

As soon as Sir Sikandar received this letter he replied that now he had no intention of returning to the Punjab.[2] Ahmadyar Khan Daultana wrote to Fazl-i-Husain: "I am really distressed to have received your letter to Bhaijan (Sikandar). I was sure you will make the elderly gesture. I again approach you, in the name of God and the Punjab, to reconsider your decision. Sikandar will not be able to come now. It is really a great pity that this unfortunate situation has arisen. You built the whole building and for God's sake do not fall it down. You and Sikandar would have surmounted all the difficulties and no one except yourself can save the province single-handed. Have mercy on us and forgive Sikandar. I was afraid of this crisis. I have every hope that by God's grace you will change your decision, otherwise I shall have nothing to do with politics."[3]

Sir Sikandar hurried to Dalhousie, but Fazl-i-Husain told him that in view of what had happened it was impossible to work with him. Sir Sikandar asked Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din to intercede on his behalf. Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din and Ahmadyar Khan Daultana went to Dalhousie; Fazl-i-Husain told them that he would soon receive the offer of the ministry in place of Firoz Khan Noon, but he would not accept it; and if Sir Sikander was prepared to become the leader, he would relinquish politics. Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din pleaded that "if from the existing workers you can think of a better man I will not press for Sikandar." Fazl-i-Husain confessed that there was no other suitable person, and agreed. Chaudhri Sahab-ud-Din telephoned[4] to Sir Sikander at Bombay and asked him to avert the catastrophe by returning to the Punjab when required, and, to offer full co-operation to Fazl-i-Husain, and not to carry on direct negotiations with the Hindus and the Sikhs. Sir Sikander

[1] Letter dated May 18, 1936
[2] Letter dated May 22, 1936.
[3] Letter dated May 20, 1936.
[4] May 23, 1936.

agreed, and telephoned[1] to Fazl-i-Husain who told him: "You should put an end to your negotiations with urban Hindus. Either come and take charge of the work yourself in which case I will wash my hands of all the work or definitely decide that you will work in co-operation with me." Sir Sikander confessed that he had been negotiating with Raja Narendra Nath, but gave the necessary assurance and agreed to come to the Punjab in November 1936 and take the place of Nawab Muzaffar Khan, who was asked to resign.

Fazl-i-Husain insisted that the leader, whoever he might be, must be given loyal support. "As to negotiations with urban Hindus," he wrote to Sir Sikander, "at this particular stage and this particular time, as you state and I stressed in my talk to your on the phone these must be in my sole charge at the present moment, though in a matter of such vital importance I should arrive at no decision and I should offer no conditions to Hindus without full consultation with you goes without saying, but the misunderstandings that exist in the minds of our detractors are such that it is essential that no ground be given for the continuance of these misunderstandings. I assure you it is not in my interest as much as it is in your own interest....I have accepted ministership. It may sound funny but Sikander it is for you more than for myself. I want you to rise to the heights of which you are capable. Rise above ordinary petty political personal considerations. Such short time as Providence permits me I want to utilise to found an organization which will be a great blessing to the province in which I want, with the help of other people, to piece together and to develop and to establish a Party which would be a blessing to people of all denominations...."[2] As a part of the settlement Fazl-i-Husain wrote to Ahmadyar Khan Daultana: "You talk of the leader's suspicions and so on. You know perfectly well that right up to the 8th May I had no complaint whatsoever against anybody, that on the 8th I was appraised of facts which caused me disappointment. Now that incident is closed and done away with and we resume our work where we left it on the 8th, and I am sure we will

[1] May 24, 1936.

[2] Letter dated May 28, 1936.

make a success of it. I will rely on you in future as before 8th of May."[1]

Everything settled, Fazl-i-Husain accepted the offer made to him by the Governor to become Minister of Education in place of Firoz Khan Noon, who was to go to England as High Commissioner for India. Fazl-i-Husain assumed charge as minister on June 20, and prepared an elaborate tour programme extending over six districts in order to meet Deputy Commissioners, educational officers, medical officers, public health officers, members of District Boards and Municipalities and non-officials, and study conditions for the organizational campaign of the Unionist Party.

Peace lasted barely a month, and when Sir Sikander came to Lahore on the 22nd June he again had talks with Raja Narendra Nath, which the *Civil & Military Gazette* said, "centred round the formation of a new political party which would rally the various elements in the province that would keep in check the communal activities of certain Muslim leaders and work whole-heartedly for the good of the province."[2] As the negotiations had reached the Press Ahmadyar Khan Daultana gave a statement to the Press and hastened to explain to Fazl-i-Husain that "there have been no negotiations. Sir Sikander only paid a social visit to Raja Narendra Nath. The misunderstanding arose because Raja Sahib was in a Hindu Sabha meeting and left it saying that he was going to meet Sikander. The reporter having heard this came and sat on the servants' bench in his house. Anand Kumar happened to come there and enquired when he was leaving the house and to what there was. Sikander replied: 'Everything is all right. The position regarding Mian Sahib is satisfactory. Raja Sahib at least should have twelve men with him and our party consists of 120 or will consist of 120.' This gave rise to the misunderstanding otherwise there was nothing."[3] Fazl-i-Husain replied: "The matter is not one which should remain between you, me and Sikander but is one in which the Party is interested. It is a matter of

[1] Letter dated May 26, 1936.
[2] June 23, 1936.
[3] June 23, 1936.

principle and should come before the Party. I wonder whether you have any objection to your handwritten letter being sent for publication to the Press. Of course, I will never send it unless it were with your approval. Your statement, I take it, is a repetition of what was attempted from Bombay. I note that you did not contradict what is mentioned both in the *People* and in the *Milap* that the object of these talks is to curb the communal tendencies of Fazl-i-Husain and further while assuring the public that Sikander will not start a separate party, you say that he will work with Fazl-i-Husain. I appreciate the very great favour involved in this offer."[1]

Fazl-i-Husain also wrote to Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din: "My health is not as satisfactory as I thought it was. We will meet on the 29th at Lahore and talk things over. I see from Lahore papers—*People*, *Milap* and others that Sikander, Ahmadyar and Narendra Nath have again been holding talks. I have also seen Ahmadyar's statement in the Press. I wonder whether Sikander and Ahmadyar deserve what I have been doing for them? I wonder whether I am right in thinking that it is in the interest of the province and the Muslims and the Party that I should help them the way I have been doing? I am putting these questions to you as you advised me to arrive at this decision."[2] Ahmadyar Khan Daultana begged that his letter should not be released to the Press, nor should it be placed before the Party,[3] to which Fazl-i-Husain replied: "I am afraid you are not correctly appreciating the situation. It is not lack of confidence or distrust. I just want to understand exactly what the position is? Maybe that there is a genuine difference of opinion in which case it is to be understood, appreciated and respected, but it is not a personal or a private matter. It is a matter for the Party and as far as I think for the whole province. If there are two different policies, no one can be sure which one is the better of the two and opinions may genuinely and rightly differ. Therefore, I do not quite appreciate your objection to having the matter discussed

[1] Letter dated June 24, 1936.
[2] Letter dated June 24, 1936.
[3] Letter dated June 26, 1936.

by the Party....There must be absolute honesty among all workers on an important point like that."[1]

In reply Ahmadyar Khan Daultana pleaded that "there are no two policies I can assure you. I cannot explain why Sir Sikander talked to Raja Sahib."[2] A reassurance was again given by him when he wrote: "Sikander must have written to you. He has asked me to tell you that he will blindly follow and will do everything that you order him to do and will see that no misunderstandings are created in future."[3]

In addition to these difficulties, Fazl-i-Husain had also to contend with the Hindu Mahasabha. Raja Narendra Nath declared the object of the Hindu Party to be the abolition of (a) communal electorates, (b) communal representation in services, (c) communal representation in Local Self-Governing bodies, (d) the discriminative provisions of the Land Alienation Act, and (e) the discriminative provisions of the indebtedness legislation. Fazl-i-Husain was anxious that the Punjab should rise from the position of being an underdog and asked for Hindu co-operation, in case the Congress failed to co-operate. He met Raja Narendra Nath at Faletti's Hotel on April 9, 1936, and it was agreed that the Communal Award was outside the scope of provincial party programmes. Fazl-i-Husain was prepared to consider mutual agreement on the lines of the joint electorate proposals of 1933, which had been abandoned by the urban Hindus and Sikhs rather than by the Muslims. With regard to representation in services, he was prepared to come to a working agreement on the basis of equality for Muslims within a reasonable time. Raja Narendra Nath agreed that temporary reservation for backward classes was necessary. Fazl-i-Husain was willing to have joint electorates in local bodies, provided population strength was reflected in voting strength. As regards the Land Alienation Act, Raja Narendra Nath held that the Act protected only the interests of the landed aristocracy who formed the majority of the Unionists. Fazl-i-Husain said that in 1928, as Revenue Member, he declared that he would not extend the scope of the Act, and was pre-

[1] Letter dated June 28, 1936.
[2] Letter dated June 29, 1936.
[3] Letter dated July 2, 1936.

pared to stiffen the Act in order to prevent the "big fish from swallowing the small fish." Raja Narendra Nath held that the relief of indebtedness had introduced drastic economic changes and curtailed materially the credit of the agriculturist, even for productive purposes. He, however, confessed that he could not be opposed to giving protection to tillers of the soil. Fazl-i-Husain was prepared to introduce the type of legislation prevalent in C. P. Raja Narendra Nath would not accept the qualifications Fazl-i-Husain made, and hoped that he would be willing to abandon his principles in order to obtain urban Hindu co-operation in securing his leadership; but Fazl-i-Husain refused to do so and the negotiations failed.

This was not the end. Professor Gulshan Rai, his most fierce opponent since 1923 and Secretary of the Mahasabha, wrote to him: "The impression which I have gathered during the last few months is that the Europeans wants Sir Sikander and not you to form the first ministry of the Autonomous Punjab. The bulk of the Hindus and Sikhs in the province also seem to have greater confidence in Sir Sikander. But many of us believe that Sir Sikander Hyat will be a very pliable tool in the hands of Sir Herbert Emerson. It seems that Hindus and the Sikhs have less faith in doing them justice in Sir Herbert than they may have in you. This is what I feel. When I met you in February last, I had an occasion to discuss the subject of our interview with Raja Narendra Nath. He pointedly expressed his view that if an understanding could be arrived at, he could trust you better than the present Head of the Punjab Government in doing justice to the Hindus. Raja Sahib, however, thinks and it also appears from his interview in the *Tribune*, that the existence of separate communal electorates will not enable you to follow a strictly national and economic policy as you have proposed in future to do. I realise that separate electorates will make the pursuit of this policy difficult. But I am sure the difficulties are not insurmountable. You possess a strength of will which few other political leaders in this province possess. Among the Muslims, I should think, you are perhaps the only one at the present moment, who could curb and keep in check the com-

munal ambitions of your community. If Hindus and Muslims, and agriculturists and non-agriculturists could combine on one common national economic programme, it will become impossible for the Governor to exercise his powers of special responsibility under the new Constitution. We can then have real responsible government in the Province. Is it not worth while to attempt it?"[1]

The Hindu Press, however, reviled him in unrestrained language, though Fazl-i-Husain persistently tried to come to an understanding with the Mahasabha or the Congress. He met Bhai Permanand in Delhi and asked him if the *Punjab Politics* offered a basis for a joint programme. Bhai Permanand did not think there was any common ground, but Fazl-i-Husain replied: "It, of course, is not possible for everybody to agree upon a programme, otherwise party government would have no significance. You will no doubt agree with me that even if there are two parties and there is disagreement on a number of important points, still it is in the interest of both parties not to develop feelings of hatred and animosity against each other. If we disagree on any other point and agree on this, I will feel satisfied. You very kindly promised to see me some day in Lahore. I will be delighted to have that opportunity, for I believe you have confidence in your judgment and it is always a pleasure to meet someone who has confidence in his own knowledge and judgment."[2]

As regards the Hindu campaign against him, he said: "I resent this campaign because it has been widening the gulf between the communities and thus retarding the political progress of the province, and perhaps of the country as a whole. The Muslims might have been helped sympathetically and peacefully to come in to their own, which they were bound to do in any case....I also resent this so-called Hindu campaign because it is now directed, in effect, against the backward section of the Hindu community itself. The fight against me on communal grounds is only a trick, a tactical method of deceiving the world. The fight is now really against Chaudhri Chhotu Ram as representing the

[1] Letter dated April 23, 1936.
[2] Letter dated February 21, 1936.

revolt of the Hindu masses against the dominance of a handful of self-seekers. The authors of the campaign are really trying to suppress him and the cause which he represents; but their efforts are foredoomed to failure."[1] Although the local Hindu papers agitated a great deal against Fazl-i-Husain's economic programme, there was unanimity amongst them in the compliments they paid to him. *Milap* congratulated him upon his intelligence, ability and deep understanding. *Bharat Mata* was equally complimentary and said that he was endowed with exceptional ability, and also pointed out that he did not do things secretly, and what he did, he did openly and with determination.

Fazl-i-Husain was anxious to appeal to the Congress. The talks begun with Bhulabhai Desai at Delhi were carried further with the Punjab Congress leaders through the intervention of Fazl-i-Husain's old friend Raizada Hans Raj. Writing to his son in England, Fazl-i-Husain described developments by saying: "As to my being in the Congress, I was in the Congress in 1917-1919. When the Congress started non-co-operation I left the Congress. Since then I have been outside the Congress because of its extremist policy since 1919. Now that the Congress has practically abandoned that policy and is reverting to the position it occupied when I was in it, naturally I felt it necessary to ask the Congress to make common cause with us, the Unionists, in the Punjab. I do not mind it being said that I have joined the Congress provided thereby it is meant that it is the Congress of the pre-non-co-operation days. As a matter of fact at the last session of the Congress at Lucknow the authorities of the Congress had still not made up their mind to take up the position I have advised them to take. It is not improbable that towards the end of this year they will adopt that position."[2]

Fazl-i-Husain died before a settlement could be arrived at, but Professor Gulshan Rai wrote: "Those who came in close contact with him knew that he would have followed a nationalist policy in the future Punjab. He would have

[1] Syed Nur Ahmad: *Mian Fazl-i-Husain*, 1936, pp. 82-83.
[2] Letter dated April 26, 1936.

bridged the gulf between the warring communities in the province. I had known him since 1913. I was a great critic of his policy which he followed in the year 1922-23, but I must say that he was one man who could stand against the bureaucracy with courage and so far as British interests are concerned the interests of Indians would have been safe in his hands. As head of the future Government of the Punjab he would have acted in a manner by which he would have never allowed the Governor to exercise his special powers." Later he wrote: "Some of us who have been carefully watching the progress of events during the last two years, know that at one time the late Mian Fazl-i-Husain was negotiating an alliance with the Congress Party....If at that time the Congress had been willing to form a coalition with other political parties, as they have now done in the Frontier Province, and which they might do in other provinces also, I would not have been surprised if the Unionist Party of Mian Fazl-i-Husain had formed an alliance with the Congress."[1]

While controversies, intrigues and negotiations were going on, Fazl-i-Husain was at the same time busy reorganizing the Unionist Party. His work began with the publication of the pamphlet *Punjab Politics*. "This pamphlet," writing to his son in England, he said, "has created a great stir, and the Press, in particular the Punjab Press, is very active about it—very strong opposition in some quarters, fairly general appreciation of the facts and fiction, and almost universal agreement with the programme for the future outlined therein....Unionist Party organization is to be set up; this organization is being outlined and some branches will be established and work commenced. It means very heavy work, but very important and useful work too. My health has not been very good. Since you left (February 1936), I have had two setbacks, but am recovering from them."[2]

On the 1st April 1936, a scheme of the Unionist Party organization was adopted and a central organization set up at No. 14-C, Davis Road, Lahore, under his chairmanship. Ahmadyar Khan Daultana was appointed 'Organizing and Office Secretary,' Sardar Habibullah, Maulvi Ghulam Moh-

[1] *The Tribune* dated December 2, 1937.
[2] Letter dated March 10, 1936.

yuddin and Syed Afzaal Ali Hasni, Organizing Secretaries, and the Nawab of Mamdot, Treasurer. Amir-ud-Din was appointed Personal Assistant to the Leader of the Party, and Mir Maqbool Mahmood was Drafting and Propaganda Secretary. The funds of the Party were contributed by the Nawab of Kalabagh, Syed Maratib Ali and Sardar Muhammad Nawaz Khan of Kot to the extent of Rs. 5,000 each, while Fazl-i-Husain, Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan, Nawab Allah Bakhsh, Nawab of Mamdot, Malik Sir Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana, Ahmadyar Khan Daultana, Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din and Chhotu Ram gave Rs. 3,000 each, and others were to pay Rs. 1,000, making a total of Rs. 50,000. This was to be spent on running the Secretariat, publishing posters, and also on giving subsidies to newspapers and to Hindu and Muslim Party candidates who were unable to afford their election expenses. A sum of Rs. 20,000 promised by the Aga Khan[1] was to be utilized for propaganda on an All-India scale. A class for the training of political workers was opened. It was decided to form a Committee of Economic Affairs, which was to consist of eminent economists and public men, to suggest changes in provincial taxation in order to implement the economic items of the programme. An Election Bureau was set up to supply information to candidates and to compose differences between Party candidates. It was to set up its agencies in all constituencies and to study all matters pertaining to elections and to answer queries from members of the Party. During May the headquarters office was put in working order, drafts of rules and regulations were completed, and the work of enrolment of volunteers and members started in earnest. Plans were prepared for organization in tahsils, cities and towns. The most important branch was that of the tahsil organizations, from which the Party was to derive its strength and stability. It was expected that by the end of September at least 75 out of 110 tahsils would be fully organized. A detailed scheme of "How to organize a Tahsil" was prepared, and workers were to be sent to the districts fully equipped

[1] In June 1936 Rs. 10,000 was received, but as soon as the Aga Khan heard of the death of Fazl-i-Husain in July 1935, he at once telegraphically asked for the return of the entire amount.

with Party literature and information. Local Branches were to be set up in villages, towns and cities. All these branches were to function under the general supervision and direction of the headquarters at Lahore. This work was pushed on with the utmost expedition.[1]

Party propaganda was conducted on modern lines. Elaborate arrangements were made to secure the support of the Press through a confidential committee of the Party. Dealings with the Vernacular Press were not to be conducted individually, but on behalf of the Party, and payments were to be made through one channel even if funds came from different sources. Selected newspapers periodically received 'guidance notes' on current political problems, and were expected to write articles, editorials and leaders based on these notes. The *Eastern Times* (Lahore) was the only Muslim daily newspaper in the Punjab which fervently supported the Party. Its circulation was increased by an annual subsidy from the Party. These arrangements were all interim arrangements because it was realized that effective propaganda could not be done except through a newspaper owned by the Party. Fazl-i-Husain, therefore, intended to take over the *Eastern Times* and to create a trust to be managed by a syndicate, but the proposal did not materialize on account of his death.

An extremely elaborate district-wise campaign was launched to secure the largest number of seats for the Unionist Party. Suitable candidates were put up for every constituency, and compromises, where possible, were made with the opposing candidates. Special attention was paid to those constituencies where a contest was likely to damage the interests of the Party as a whole. In Rohtak, for example, a contest between Chaudhri Lal Chand and Chaudhri Chhotu Ram would have been fatal to the unity of rural Hindus in the South-East Punjab. Chaudhri Lal Chand was already negotiating with the Hindu Sabha, and a split seemed imminent. Fazl-i-Husain intervened and convinced Chaudhri Lal Chand that but for the unity and strength of the Party, the Punjab would fall behind Congress Provinces in self-respect and progress, and he agreed to

[1] Letter dated June 1936 from Ahmadyar Khan Daultana.

withdraw in favour of Chaudhri Chhotu Ram on the understanding that he would be helped by Chaudhri Chhotu Ram to become Chairman of the Rohtak District Board.[1] Fazl-i-Husain made a forecast that he would have the support of eighty Muslims, fifteen rural Hindus, fifteen Sikhs and four landholders, while there would perhaps be in the opposition ten Muslims (Ahrars and Urbanites), five Congressmen, fifteen Sikhs and twenty-one urban Hindus. The elections took place after six months, and the forecast was approximately correct.

Fazl-i-Husain was not only anxious to acquire power under provincial autonomy and to carry out the programme of his Party, he also wanted to raise the level of political life in the country. He selected volunteers who, he was sure, were selfless workers, and were not merely offering help to better their election prospects. To a candidate who offered support provided he got better terms than those given by other parties he replied: "My advice to you and everybody else is not to treat the matter of elections as a personal matter for which negotiations with Ahrar and Congress and others should be carried on secretly. What you and others like you should do is to study the principles for which the Punjab should stand and the party standing for that programme and creed should be elected by you."[2] Fazl-i-Husain was anxious above all that the elections should be fought on political and party lines rather than on personal, sectarian or communal lines.[3] The manifesto of the Party said: "The experience of other countries and the verdict of history alike emphasize the importance of running elections on party basis. The logic of this proposition is obvious. Responsible Government means that the party in majority in the legislature will run the government. Candidates who do not seek election on the basis of any specific programme or party are dark horses, while others who are returned on the basis of a definite programme or with a direct party label declare what they are striving for. The art of responsible government, therefore, consists in evolving a constructive programme,

[1] *The Civil and Military Gazette*, dated May 22, 1936.
[2] Letter dated February 26, 1936.
[3] Letter dated April 15, 1936.

consistent with one's convictions, which is likely to appeal to the majority of voters and may rally round it the majority of members of the legislature. The basis of such a programme must be a spirit of compromise, otherwise, any individual member, by a single stroke of the pen, may draft an ideal programme, promising to bring overnight the kingdom of heaven on earth or may make fantastic election pledges guaranteeing magic fulfilment of every one's desires, but unless he can mobilize the majority of the reasonable elements in the province in support of his programme, he and his party can only remain a cry in the wilderness or claim mere academic achievements."

Fazl-i-Husain was continuously investigating the minutest details of every sphere of administration to see what improvements could be introduced. He hoped that under provincial autonomy the beneficent activities of Government would be extended on an unprecedented scale. This appeared difficult, because under the financial provisions of the new constitution revenue was expected to decrease by two or three crores. He, therefore, wanted to devise schemes for reduction in expenditure without reduction in the activities of the administration. The emoluments of public servants were to be revised and time scales abandoned or so very extensively altered as to enable a reduction of expenditure which when in full operation would save two or three crores. The number of departments was to be reduced by some of them being combined in the interests of economy. Provincial autonomy was not to be used as a means of profit by those in power. The cost of the Cabinet and Parliamentary Secretaries was not to exceed the cost under the existing Government, while the emoluments of the members of the legislature were also to be strictly limited. As the distribution of Government patronage in the matter of appointments was a source of misunderstandings among the various classes and communities, all branches of the public services were to be recruited so as to give 50% to Muslims, 20% to Sikhs and 30% to others. Further, a scheme was to be devised whereby within ten years Muslim representation in all provincial services and subordinate services, paid at

the rate of Rs. 100 and above, was to be not less than 50%, and in posts of Rs. 100 and below, not less than 56%.

Rural dispensaries were to be placed under the control of the Public Health Staff. The hospitals were to be reformed, suitable economies effected, and corruption removed. Vacancies in the Medical College staff were in future to go to Indian physicians. A scheme for training Indian nurses on a very extensive scale was to be put into practice. On the educational side, girls' education, hitherto neglected, was to be greatly expanded. A large number of *Ustanis* were to be trained, and in order to have trained Indian teachers within the shortest possible time 400 well qualified British teachers were to be imported. The curriculum and the scheme of examination for girls were to be modified. In boys' schools a fresh programme of expansion was to be formulated. Wastage in primary classes was to be substantially reduced, and the teaching of vernacular and oriental languages was to be vastly improved. In order to give some voice to Muslims the Constitution of the Punjab University was to be altered by legislation. As it was undesirable to introduce separate electorates in the University, constituencies were to be framed so as to give equal opportunities to Muslims to send their representatives to the Senate. The Senate was to consist of 40% Muslims, 20% Europans, and 40% Hindus, Sikhs and Christians.

The formation of the ministry under provincial autonomy was as yet nearly a year ahead; and these items were only preliminary and incomplete ideas for an elaborate programme under preparation. The creed of the Unionist Party was defined as the ideals of:—

(a) attainment of dominion status by all constitutional means at as early a date as practicable;

(b) the securing of an honourable status for Indians overseas;

(c) the establishment in the province of provincial autonomy *de facto*;

(d) the acceptance of the community of economic interests as the true basis of political parties, irrespective of caste, creed or residence; and

(e) the provision of equal facilities and opportunities for all, with special solicitude for the backward classes and areas, whether rural or urban.

With regard to the economic aspect of the party programme the manifesto said: "The problem of the Punjab is essentially an economic problem. The population of the province is nearly 57% Muslims, 28% Hindus and 13% Sikhs; and about 90% of them live directly or indirectly by agriculture. But, whether they belong to one community or the other, and irrespective of their being agriculturists or non-agriculturists, rural or urban, it has been estimated that the average income of a Punjabi is less than the expense on the clothing and feeding of a prisoner in the Punjab Jails. Moreover, above 80% of the proprietors are involved in debt which amounts to forty times the land revenue, while annual interest charges alone are nearly ten times the total land revenue of the province. The fall in agricultural prices has further intensified economic distress. Unemployment is rampant. Graduates have been seen cleaning shoes in the streets, and the pathetic tale of promising youths committing suicide due to lack of employment is a call which no patriotic Punjabi can afford to ignore. This is the real problem, the problem of poverty and starvation which is staring the Punjab in the face and demands the most earnest and collective effort from the best of the Punjabis. It affects all communities alike, urbanites as well as ruralites, agriculturists as well as non-agriculturists. Government service can at best absorb about three in every thousand of the population; 997 still remain. Moreover, it is obvious that the communal demands must, before long, be either met or settled, and the agonizing pains of economic iniquities and starvation will, unless treated in time, exhibit their symptoms in the language of fire and blood. The country wants bread and no patriotic constructive party can, with wisdom, afford to postpone or ignore this vital issue." Fazl-i-Husain elucidated this by saying: "We do not want to pose as communists or Sovietwallas, but we claim that we have an intense desire to raise the masses to a higher level of living than they occupy at present, that we

have it on our programme, and in order to achieve this object, it will be our business to persuade the wealthier classes to become alive to their responsibility in this matter and to prepare themselves to shoulder the burden in that connection, for such wise action on their part is the best guarantee of the maintenance of the integrity of private property and of healthy capitalism; while selfish capitalism, narrow capitalism, greedy capitalism defeats its own object. If the gulf between the rich and the poor grows wider and wider, no Government can protect the rich for any length of time. Therefore, it is a wise investment on the part of the rich to enable Government to take steps to elevate the masses, to spend money on beneficent activities so that the gulf may be bridged, if not altogether removed."[1]

[1] Speech on April 12, 1936, at the inauguration of the Unionist Party Headquarters.

CHAPTER XXI

## *THE END*

FAZL-I-HUSAIN'S health had always been, and was now more than ever, a serious problem. In 1918, as a result of a severe attack of influenza, his bronchial tubes became weak and he developed chronic catarrh. The trouble lingered on, and the fibres of the lungs became elastic, a symptom more common among tuberculosis than bronchitis patients. Dr. Sutherland was of the view that he suffered from tuberculosis, but subsequent examination proved that he was suffering instead from dilation of the bronchial tubes, which made the expulsion of phlegm difficult and caused breathlessness and exhaustion. During the next ten years the trouble continued to develop, and it sapped his vitality and his resistance to other diseases.

His long-standing bronchitis worsened under adverse climatic conditions, for example during the monsoon season; and since his official duties required him to be in Simla every season from 1921 to 1934, he repeatedly fell ill. In 1932, in South Africa, his lungs became congested with pleuritic pains. From then onwards his respiration became rapid and harsh and both the lungs were affected. He continuously lost weight, which made him weak and incapable of strenuous effort. This was a serious handicap, and it prevented him keeping in touch with his colleagues, the Press, members of the central legislatures, and others. He thought several times that he must either recover his health sufficiently and get rid of this handicap or resign. He had no time to talk to unbiased members of the Council and that prevented his securing their votes without endless discussions in the Council itself. He recorded in his diary:

"I get a temperature daily and feel depressed, dejected, in the world, and yet not in it or certainly not of it. All matters, private and public, I deal with as if I were an outsider."[1] He was generally tired, depressed, and weak. There was a perpetual feeling of lassitude, and lack of inclination to exert himself. No precaution or medicines seemed to be of any avail. In March 1932 he felt it impossible to carry on, and in order to improve his health he took four months' leave and went to Abbottabad. It was no holiday, but rather a painful fight against disease and suffering. Several teeth were removed on account of pyorrhœ and he became so weak that his cough had to be eased by medicines. There was some improvement in his health during his stay at Abbottabad, but it was not appreciable, and a few months of hard work revived the old symptoms. In 1934 Colonel Harper-Nelson advised him that "for your own sake and your family's sake, you should take complete mental and physical rest," but he paid no heed to the warning, and continued with his strenuous official and private duties.

In January 1935 he caught a chill which laid him up with his usual trouble. His recovery was slow, and complications such as waxy disease, enlarged liver and kidney trouble made him more weak than usual. With the greatest difficulty he managed to complete his term of office. Bidding farewell to the Council of State, he said: "What I want to do is to devote my attention now for sometime to come to develop physical force, mental force and, if possible, spiritual force to help my country's interests." Just before he left Delhi Major Aspinnel warned him and asked him to take complete rest for a long period otherwise the consequences might be grave. Throughout April he felt weary, weak, tired and exhausted. This was a reaction to the last spurt of energy required to wind up the work at Delhi before handing over charge.

On his return to Lahore, he was bedridden but in spite of that he still received visitors, and attended to his correspondence and other work. He had an almost constant

[1] Diary—May 4, 1932.

temperature of 99° which rose in the course of the day, and in the afternoon he used to feel thoroughly exhausted but this did not prevent him from doing his normal work. Procrastination was unknown to him, however busy he was, however ill he was, work was always carried on, and demands for advice and help were met. Throughout August and September 1935 his fever continued, and towards the end of September he felt that he would not be fit to resume office again.[1] In December 1935 his kidneys became worse and oedema of the legs made it difficult for him to move about. He felt depressed, and wrote to his wife: "I wish you Id Mubarik, long life and good health. Forgive me for my trespasses during the last thirteen years. Life is uncertain and possibly there may not be another chance, so I hasten to choose this occasion for asking your pardon. This year I am completely broken down."[2]

Continuous physical suffering did not break his spirit for public service, and at the risk of a complete breakdown he undertook to reorganize the Unionist Party. In April 1936 events were crowding upon him—he was extremely busy with the reorganization of the Unionist Party. The machinations of the Ahrars, the intransigence of Dr. Iqbal and the League Parliamentary Board, the fierce opposition of the urban Hindus and Sir Sikander's negotiations with certain urban Hindus and Sikhs, all presented a most formidable task. His health was rapidly deteriorating and in addition domestic worries made matters worse.

Hitherto very little has been said about his domestic life and indeed there was not much which could be commented upon. From his first arrival in Lahore in 1905, he was much too busy with professional and public affairs to be able to devote any time to his family except, of course, that the comfort of his wife and the health of his children were his constant concern and he did all that was necessary. His wife was not educated enough to share his thoughts and tribulations about his official and public life. He had a large family of children and as his pre-occupation with politics and official life increased he had less and less time

[1] Diary—September 22, 1935.

[2] Letter dated December 28, 1935 (Urdu).

to spare for his children beyond what was essential to settle various matters regarding their upbringing and education. His wife was devoted to household work and to the care of the children, but the difference in education and outlook made agreement on everyday problems of life difficult, and as he was temperamentally incapable of making a purely emotional appeal to resolve such disagreements, unhappiness on this account was not infrequent. Except during later years when the ravages of disease and the perplexities of public life made him irritable, Fazl-i-Husain was generally forbearing and tolerant, but it remains a fact that in later years family life on the whole afforded him little happiness. A few months before his last illness he wrote to his wife: "It pained me to read your letter. All my life I have wished that you should live peacefully and comfortably but I have never succeeded and it is a pity. I am weak and infirm. I have not the patience, and forbearance I used to have before. You get annoyed with me without any reason. You are dearer to me than myself and I have been prepared for your sake and for the sake of your health and comfort to spend whatever amount may be necessary and am still prepared to do so. Satisfactory arrangements of the house cannot be made unless there is punctuality, proper distribution of work among servants and various articles are purchased in time. The house is generally disorderly and in confusion. It has never been run smoothly and satisfactorily. As long as I had health and strength I put up with it and tried to improve it. But life has been spent in confusion and disorder. Now the last stage has arrived and disease has got the better of me. My strength has given way and I am faced with the last stages of disease. I, therefore, need comfort, quiet and an orderly house. It is necessary that there should no disputes, petty annoyances, worry and confusion, because all these are serious setbacks to general well-being."[1]

In May 1936 he went to Dalhousie for a rest cure and made elaborate arrangements to improve his health by

[1] Letter dated April 2, 1936 (Urdu).

careful medical treatment. Progress was extremely slow, and in June he was told by his doctors that his heart had become so weak that he might collapse at any time. This depressed him and made him feel dejected. When he accepted the ministership offered to him by the Governor, it was not in a spirit of jubilation, but of resignation and almost of martyrdom. He wrote to his wife: "My health is bad. It is slightly better but only very slightly. In spite of my weakness and ill-health the Governor has ordered me to take charge of ministerial duties. Friends have also pressed me, therefore, health permitting, I have undertaken this difficult task. God give me courage and health that I may be able to discharge my duties satisfactorily. If I have one or two years more of life I may be able to do some service to my country."[1]

He proposed certain well ordered and smooth arrangements for living with which his wife did not agree. He reiterated his proposals and added: "In the past you managed to carry on, and thank God you managed to do so reasonably well. But now the need is greater, I have to work as a minister during the winter and also to do electioneering and establish a ministry under the new constitution. It is necessary that the arrangements for the house in Lahore should be stable and satisfactory otherwise I shall have to resign."[2] His wife still resisted Fazl-i-Husain's suggestions; and in despair he wrote: "You know my condition, terribly weak and run down, unable to eat, my swollen feet and legs have become incapable of performing their functions, the Governor and the people are just dragging about my corpse, and on the top of it all I have earned the displeasure of my lifelong companion. God knows if I have a few weeks' or a few months' life left to me. I have nothing to gain from the ministry. When the whole life has been a prolonged misery, what is the point in abandoning anything at the last stage and waiting to let death come and claim me as its own? If I had known that you would be so annoyed at my proposals for my comfort, I would never have accepted the ministry. Now I am more or less

[1] Letter dated May 26, 1936 (Urdu).
[2] Letter dated May 29, 1936 (Urdu).

trapped. In the first place it is probable that I may get ill in Simla and die, and if I escape I may resign. Then I would be confined to the house and would not require anything or any arrangements. One or two servants would be enough for me. Then you would be free to do what you like in the house, may manage it well or manage it ill; there would be no fear of loss of reputation or a desire to gain one, no need of hospitality or anything else. When my condition becomes worse I can shift to a Nursing Home or a hospital. As long as I am alive we can stay together as before; just as we have spent life so far, I can spend the rest with patience and forbearance."[1]

Meanwhile his health continued to deteriorate. His vitality and weight progressively diminished. The swelling of the legs due to oedema made every movement excruciatingly painful. Still he was determined to fight to the last; but an incident occurred which severely and finally shook his confidence and will power. On June 20, Sheikh Rahmatullah gave a farewell party in his honour. He developed a temperature in the morning, but in the afternoon he felt slightly better and agreed to go merely to save his host the embarrassment of holding the function without the chief guest. As his legs and feet were swollen it was torture even to dress, but by an almost superhuman effort he went and talked to the guests in his usual quiet and courteous manner. At the end of the function while leaving the house of his host, his strength gave way and he fell down a few steps. He was helped into a *dandy* and taken home. He felt humiliated at having publicly exhibited such weakness for the first time in his life. It pained him to think that he could no longer perform his everyday duties, and had to be assisted by others to do so. His own helplessness depressed him, and he talked of his end being near. He sent for his uncle, Mian Ali Ahmad Khan, who was in charge of the family estate at Batala, his ancentral home, and said: "The family graveyard should be put in order. The surrounding wall is crumbling down and should be repaired. The available plots near my

[1] Letter dated June 8, 1936 (Urdu).

father's grave should be cleared. If I die at Lahore the riff-raff Muslims would want to bury me in the Shahidgunj mosque or the Badshahi mosque or at Shah Muhammad Ghaus but I would like to be buried in the family graveyard at Batala. Muslims should not worship the dead. They should not look to the past but to the future." Having settled the arrangements for the graveyard, he said: "When I became a minister for the first time I asked God to let me live till fifty, and I was granted nine years in excess of what I asked for. Now I want to live for two more years, but it seems my wishes will not be fulfilled. Two daughters are already married. Nasim is settled in life, Azim is almost settled, and two daughters still remain to be married, for which I need both time and money. Above all my life work for my province is nearing completion and two years would have enabled me to complete my contribution to the welfare of the Punjab and India. Only then would all my duties be complete, and I could die in peace."

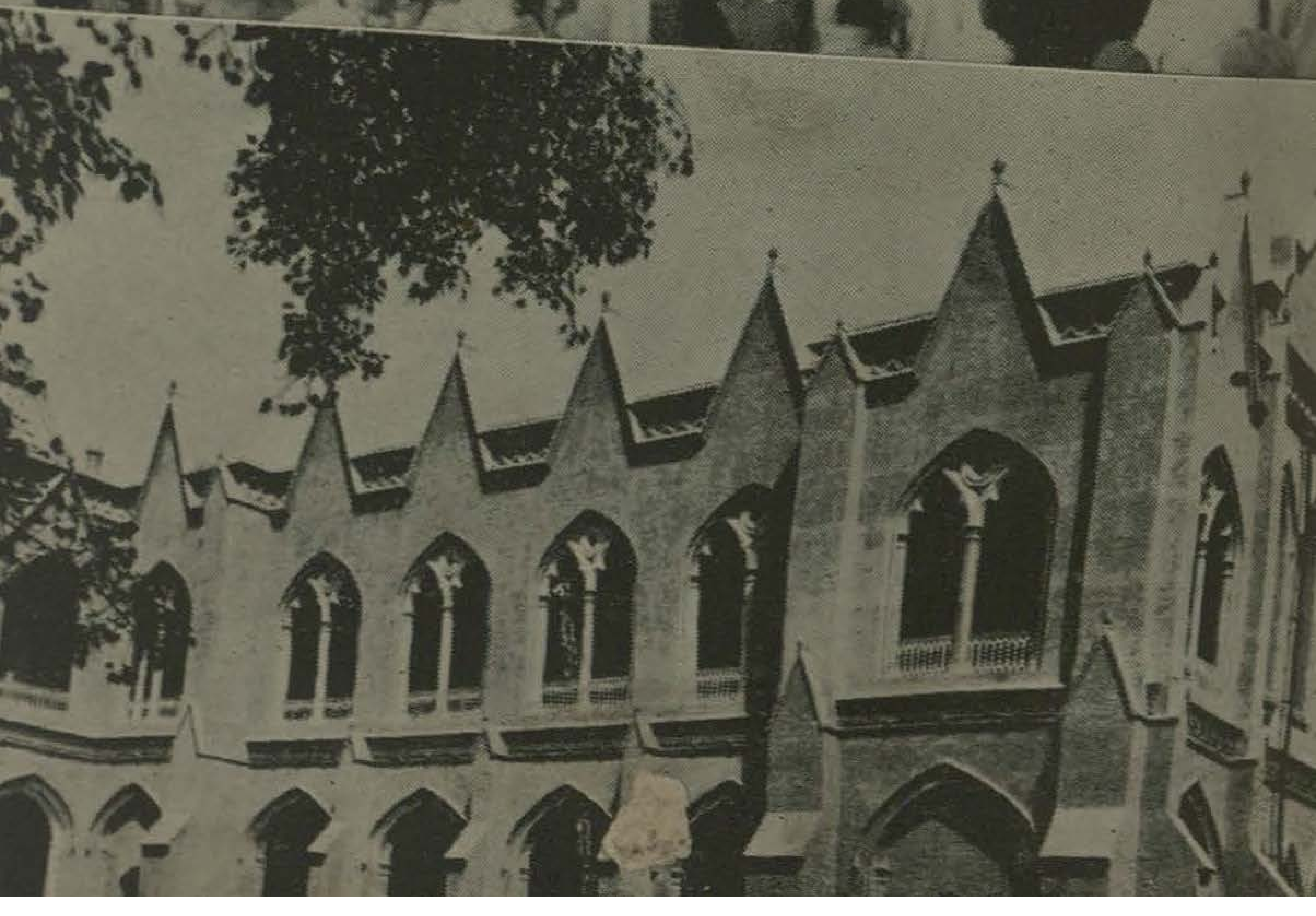
Even in the throes of such dark depression, his will to struggle to the very end did not desert him, and in response to numerous requests to attend to official duties, and also to supervise the reorganization of the Party at the summer capital, he decided to go to Simla; though he knew from past experience of nearly fourteen years that the climate of Simla would, in the existing state of his health, very likely prove fatal. Nevertheless he decided to go, and to make an elaborate tour programme covering six districts, in order to give a start to the Unionist Centres in those districts and to settle the disputes between various candidates of the Party for the forthcoming elections. On the afternoon of the 27th he left Dalhousie and spent the night at Gurdaspur, where he worked hard all next day, sitting in his bed on the verandah of the Rest House, attending to his files, meeting officials and other visitors, and discussing the work of the departments in his charge and the forthcoming elections. He saw Rai Bahadur Man Mohan, Inspector of Schools, and for nearly two hours discussed the possibilities of improving vernacular education in the Punjab. He reached Lahore on June 29, and, while consultations were

going on with the doctors about his health, preparations were being made for going to Simla.

He was taken ill on July 1, and within a day he suddenly took a turn for the worse. A committee of the most eminent doctors of Lahore attended on him, but the necessary will to resist the disease was lacking, and from the beginning the doctors felt that they were fighting a losing battle. Fazl-i-Husain was fully concious of the slender chances of his recovery, and when one of the doctors tried to cheer him up, he analysed every symptom of his disease and declared that recovery was impossible. His temperature rose rapidly, and on the third day he was delirious. On the fourth day he was a little better, and on seeing Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din, who had rushed from Dalhousie to see him, said: "My time has come, I am absolutely ready. I have no fear or anxiety. I shall bear it with courage and patience." He sent for his wife and asked pardon of her for anything that he might have done to hurt her during his married life and begged her to marry their two remaining daughters on the dates already fixed by him, and not to let his death make any difference to the arrangements. He also gave injunctions to his son and daughters of what he hoped and required of them. On the fifth day he developed urœmia and high fever, which made him delirious for long periods except when glucose injections helped to clear his brain or electric treatment of the kidneys relieved the urœmia. He lay in this condition for the next four days, and breathed his last on July 9.

The news of his death spread like wildfire. The Punjab Muslims felt the loss deeply, and in Lahore they wanted to give expression to their sorrow as their last homage. It was suggested that his body should be taken in procession through the main streets of the city and buried in the Badshahi mosque or Islamia College grounds. Mian Afzal Husain, his brother, refused to agree, and insisted that the last wish of Fazl-i-Husain, to be buried in his family graveyard at Batala, should be respected. The next morning the *Janaza* prayers were offered in the Islamia College grounds. The concourse was tremendous,





and people of all communities, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Christians, were present. His face was uncovered, and thousands passed by in tears. It was again strongly urged that he might be buried in the Badshahi mosque, but Mian Afzal Husain refused to alter the decision arrived at the previous night. Thereafter the body was taken to Batala and buried. Messages of condolence and sympathy to the family poured in from every nook and corner of India. There was hardly a Muslim organization in India which did not pass a condolence resolution. Innumerable educational institutions in the Punjab closed as a mark of respect. Indians holding the most diverse political views gave expression to their admiration; while some Englishmen in the Punjab were said to have heaved a sigh of relief at the removal of one of the most difficult co-operators since 1921.

Bold headlines appeared across the front pages of the leading newspapers. The Associated Press reported: "The news of Sir Fazl-i-Husain's death spread in Simla within a few minutes of the tragic event in Lahore. It has cast a deep gloom over the Summer Capital of India, for it has meant the removal from Indian political life of a striking p[illegible]sonality. He was in fact the most successful politician of the post-war period in India and had few equals in political experience and sagacity." He was called the 'Maker of Modern India,'[1] 'the most successful politician of his day in India,'[2] 'the uncrowned king of the Punjab,'[3] 'Sir Syed Ahmad Khan of the day,'[4] 'Creator of the New Islam in India,'[5] and 'India's greatest statesman.'[6] The B.B.C. declared: "Sir Fazl-i-Husain was far and away among the most important political figure in the Punjab and one of the ablest leaders hitherto produced by the Muhammadan community. ....He was practically certain to become the first Prime Minister of the Punjab under the

[1] *The Light*, July 10, 1936.
[2] *T[illegible] and Military Gazette*, July 10, 1936.
[3] [illegible]es, July 10, 1936.
[4] [illegible]y 11, 1936.
[5] *Th*[illegible]y 11, 1936.
[6] *The Eastern Times*, July 12, 1936.

Reformed Constitution."[1] A memorial meeting was held in the Gaiety Theatre at Simla and the convener of the meeting said: "We are met together this evening to mourn the passing of a great public man and to do honour to his memory. The tributes that have been paid during the past few days to his work and character, many of them from men who differed from his views, bear eloquent witness to his greatness....He was a great nationalist. He had always at heart the good of India and of Indians, and if after 1921 he talked little about nationalism in the abstract, all who had contact with him knew that he was first and last a lover of his country and a staunch champion of the rights of his countrymen. He believed that those rights could be won through democratic institutions, and in his own person and by his own achievements he proved his creed. He had exceptional political sagacity. Perhaps the greatest of his many successes was the clear contact which he helped to establish between the people and the Government. He was very jealous of the rights and traditions of the Legislative Council, and he did much to create and maintain its high standards of debate and conduct. Of scrupulous integrity himself, he set a fine example of public service...He had a strong sense of justice and believing profoundly that the claims of his own community were just he did not hesitate to press them with all the force of his strong will, but more than any man in India he justified those claims by raising the educational standards and political consciousness of his co-religionists. In this, as in other aspects, he combined the practical sense of an administrator with the wisdom of a statesman. He had quite an exceptional foresight and he had the habit of surveying all sides of a problem. Whether one agreed with his views on a particular question or not he always compelled thought. He was cautious in making commitments and in giving promises, but, once they were made or given, he scrupulously observed them. Above all he was a man of great courage, was ready to fight an unpopular cause if he believed it was just. Indifferent to popular criticism, and

[1] July 9, 1936.

determined in the face of opposition, in his later years, he made a gallant fight against the ravages of disease and to the end he refused to allow physical infirmity to dim the ardour of his spirit. By general consent he was the greatest Parliamentarian whom the reforms have produced, and it is a tragedy that he should not have been spared to help India and his province along the next stage of constitutional development."[1]

[1] *The Civil and Military Gazette*, July 15, 1936.

## CHAPTER XXVII

## *CONCLUSION*

FAZL-I-HUSAIN was a tall, slightly built, reserved figure, concealing an intensely purposeful, practical and alert mind behind a calm and even passive appearance. He mixed with the actors on the political stage, but dominated it more often, and to a surprising extent, from behind the scenes. He was a leader of men and delighted in working with them and for them. He fought for the success of every small move which he made on the political chess-board as if nothing beyond that move mattered to him in life. This sometimes diverted the attention of the spectator from the higher ends of his game. The success of every effort meant for him the begining of a new effort. He had the rare ability to keep his mind fixed steadily on the distant horizon, and at the same time concentrate his whole effort on what was immediately and practically possible. With this quality he combined extraordinary shrewdness, tremendous will-power and force of character.

From the beginning he was taciturn, self-reliant and self-respecting. As a barrister he never discussed his fees with his clients. Even as a junior at the Bar he used to write down on a slip of paper his fee for accepting a brief, which he handed over to his clerk; once the amount was written, it was never altered. He never asked for personal favours. His self-respect showed itself in staunch adherence to his promises. His allies as well as his opponents could depend on his word. This was one of the secrets of his success in political bargaining. People would accept even somewhat less favourable terms from him than from a rival, because his terms carried with them at least a gua-

rantee of his strict and loyal adherence to them through thick and thin.[1]

He had a penetrating and an analytical mind. As a lawyer he was able to use his power of quick and clear analysis to very good purpose. In politics he was a brilliant student of realities. He analysed every situation quickly and clearly, overlooking no details yet grasping the essentials among them. He knew exactly how a particular individual or group of individuals would react to a certain proposition. This made him almost irresistible as a diplomat. He judged carefully the extent to which he could make his conditions acceptable to others from their respective points of view. The impossible he left unattempted, but he went whole-heartedly after what was possible, very often using the support of one man or party to compel the support of another. He understood that the essence of politics was compromise; but in order not to fail in his objective nor to sacrifice his principles, he aimed at manoeuvring opposition into acquiescence. At an early age he used to test his power of foreseeing the course of a debate and the lines of voting on a proposition. When he was Secretary of the College Committee of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam, he availed himself of a spare hour now and again to write out the minutes of meetings which were yet to be held.

Force of character, prodigious capacity for hard work and concentrated effort, and firm and patient adherence to a purpose distinguished him from his contemporaries. He did not believe in doing things casually, or in coveting office and power merely for the sake of letting others exercise them in his name. He made the closest study of the details of every question he dealt with, and evolved his own independent views on it. When he decided to accomplish something, he seldom gave up its pursuit, and waited patiently, perhaps for years, but on the first favourable opportunity he brought the matter up again, and so on until success was achieved. He believed in himself, and was never afraid of standing against popular prejudices when he considered it right to oppose them. His firmness and

[1] Syed Nur Ahmad: *Mian Fazl-i-Husain*, 1936, pp. 101-102.

self-confidence lent courage to his friends and unnerved his opponents. With something of the born dictator in him, he continued to dictate to his fellow-men throughout his public career, sometimes pleasantly, sometimes curtly, and at other times without letting them realize that they were being dictated to.

He was ambitious, but it was not personal ambition. He fought for power not for its own sake but as a means of carrying out his nation-building schemes. He avoided the limelight of publicity as far as possible, and was always concerned with producing results rather than with gaining credit for them. He was a man of few words; but what he said was full of meaning. Whatever he intended to do he would not trumpet through the Press or from the platform, but would simply carry it out. When anyone went and complained to him of some injustice, he listened patiently and said nothing in reply. The man would go away disappointed, but would be surprised and overjoyed to find some days or months or even years later that Fazl-i-Husain had tried to do all he could till his efforts had borne fruit. A man of indomitable adherence to principles, personal considerations were of no consequence to him, no matter how closely a person might be related to him, or how old and intimate a friend he might be. This made his bitterest enemies rely on his word and trust him. Also, it convinced his friends that it was useless for anyone to approach him with a request for a personal favour. In the matter of appointments of Muslims, which occupied a great deal of his time as minister, as soon as the principle of the appointment of a Muslim was settled, he was no longer interested, except that in he wanted the appointments to be made strictly on grounds of merit. Even persons for whom he had the greatest regard were afraid and ashamed of asking him for a favour; and though this lost him some friends, in the long run it won him the respect and admiration of a multitude of people. Even his worst detractors admitted that he did not make recommendations for personal reasons.

In personal and political matters alike, Fazl-i-Husain had a deep-rooted objection to intimidation, and when anyone attempted it his ancestral Rajput fighting spirit was provoked and he fearlessly took up the challenge. He was always prepared to talk to any adversary; and in fact invited those who disagreed with him most to argue with him. He treated personal criticism with contempt, and never bothered to reply; he only took up the cudgels when his policy or principles were, according to him, unfairly criticised or misunderstood. His confidence in the justness of all that he did made him regard it as unnecessary to vindicate himself in public; his characteristic comment was that he could put the same time and energy to better use. He detested flattery and invariably retorted so cynically that the flatterer never repeated the performance again.

He never soiled his tongue with retaliations against his rivals. He successfully avoided permitting a rivalry to develop into a public controversy, and always endeavoured to keep personalities as much as possible out of politics. He treated pettiness and personal gibes with indifference. He was not vindictive even when he had ample opportunities to harm someone who had wronged him.. He considered it 'all in the game,' and never let the injury done to him distort his attitude towards those who wronged him. It was characteristic of him that he never let his cordial personal relations with Harkishan Lal, Dr. Iqbal, Sir Mohammad Shafi, Sir Shadi Lal and Dr. Gokal Chand be interfered with by their acute political differences.

The dominant note of his nature was an unconquerable power of will and immutable purpose with a mind like a diamond which could cut its way through anything. Although the ravages of disease made his body weak and frail, his will never faltered, he never accepted defeat, never lost hope, and never gave up a fight even if he could only achieve a small part of what he had set out to achieve. It was astonishing that such an infirm body should harbour such a tremendous and warlike spirit. As a Rajput he was intensely proud of his ancestry, and of the fighting qualities of his race, which he amply displayed. He had complete

mastery over himself and his emotions, and was, therefore, far removed from demagogy.

He decided most things by word of mouth as this was the best way to exercise his great powers of analysis and persuasion. These conversations were assisted by notes; every conversation was the result of careful forethought and a systematic examination of every aspect of the problem. He was extremely patient in conversation, because his object was not merely to express himself or to air his views, but to convince the interlocutor of what he was himself convinced of. He listened to everyone with close attention and talked gently, politely, but decisively, and conveyed his approval or disapproval in unmistakable terms. The conversation generally took the form of short and simple but carefully worded questions to which the answers were very often 'yes' or 'no', and so on till the argument was completed. It was the method of a brilliant, sauve and clever lawyer.

It was, however, somewhat difficult to understand Fazl-i-Husain. One had to take pains to do so; his reserve gave the impression of his being impersonal, cold and mechanical, but he was in fact a man of strong feelings who in the characteristic Victorian manner used great restraint in repressing his emotions. One had to be receptive to become conscious of the underlying warmth of his personality. If this did not lend charm of personality it certainly lent dignity. In later years his reserve increased, and he became more inscrutable and uncommunicative, and it was not easy for an average person to discover the ideas inspiring him. He very seldom discussed principles on the ground that first-rate men do not need them to be explained; and as for others who are incapable of appreciating first principles, it is hardly worth while telling them about something they cannot value. His attention was, therefore, confined to working out the details of the matter in hand, while often he alone was conscious of the fundamental motive which dawned on others only when the project was complete. This kept his followers wondering why they were being asked to do certain things or pursue certain policies they could not fully understand. Towards the end

of his life his friends showed increasing dissatisfaction with his brief oracular utterances, and some charged him with dictatorial tendencies. During the reorganization of the Unionist Party in 1936 when some, who thought it was due to lack of trust, complained to him of this, he felt irritated that his sincerity should be doubted and became even more obdurate in his silence. This was partly due to his poor opinion of those around him, and partly to his perpetual ill-health which made physical effort difficult and tiresome.

He firmly believed in human progress, and in endeavouring every day to do as much as possible to carry the world at least a step further. He had early concluded that happiness and a good life do not consist in pursuing the satisfaction of one's senses and desires, but in making others happy, in being methodical, in having a due appreciation of the various problems of life, and in readily responding to such duties and obligations as fall to one's lot. "In the latter part of our lives," he wrote to a friend, "we pay the penalty of living to a good mature age. Those who are dear and near to us pass away, while we have the satisfaction of continuing to live, we suffer the pain and anguish involved in those dear to us departing, till a stage is reached when we do not long to live and death does not appear to be such a very dreadful thing. Mental satisfaction is the main thing and without it life cannot be but a burden. It is, however, up to us not to set the standard of mental satisfaction too high, and not to expect too much from life, from society and from existence. Our sorrows are unbearable, but our remaining life has to be led, let us live it to please and help others and find solace in that."[1] He carried out this ideal in practice, even at the risk of a premature death, because he never spared himself in his devotion to duty and in his desire to promote the welfare of his community, his province and his country.

He was extremely thorough in all that he undertook. In his administrative work he was creative; to start with he made brief statistical enquiries, which developed into wider questions asked from the heads of departments, and finally

[1] Letter dated July 1, 1935, to Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din.

he came forward with a fully prepared scheme. His encyclopaedic knowledge was a healthy check on his opponents and inspired confidence in his followers. As he never did anything in haste or without good reason, and admitted his mistakes at once and frankly, the trust he created among party members was absolute. He believed that it was better to make amends for a mistake than to try and cover it up.

He regarded popularity or public applause as ephemeral and of little value. He was interested more in the achievement itself than in the glory of it. His anxiety was to get done what he wanted, and if the credit went to someone else it did not concern him. This helped him to achieve more than he would have done otherwise, because it enabled him to avoid jealousies and petty rivalries, and at the same time to use people more effectively. In fact very often he preferred that his proposals should emanate from others as their own. He never addressed any mass meeting, nor was he ever taken out in processions. He obliterated himself from the front page in order to control matters more adequately. It was also characteristic of him never to pour himself out on paper or in speech, and this naturally stood in the way of his acquiring fame. His pamphlet *Punjab Politics* was anonymous like most of his other writings. Countless articles written by him on current politics appeared in the newspapers for over twenty years, but seldom over his own signature. They were sent to various friends who passed them on to various newspapers, very often in their own names. He avoided making public statements or presiding over functions, and only did so when it was imperative and some specific and useful purpose was to be served which could not be achieved by any other means. He scrupulously avoided propaganda about himself. He did not have the following or popularity of Nehru, Das or Gandhi, but he was at heart a patriot, and for sheer political dexterity never was equalled. Whether in the Punjab Government, in the Government of India, or in retirement, in health or in illness, during the last six-

teen years of his life, he was a force all parties had to reckon with, and none more so than the bureaucracy.

Honour and titles came to him unsought, and though he accepted them he did not attach any importance to them. The title of Khan Bahadur was followed by that of Knight in 1925, K.C.I.E. in 1929, and K.C.S.I. in 1932; he received the degree of L.L.D. from the Punjab University in 1933 and that of D. Litt. from Delhi University in 1934. Yet he liked to be called simply Mian Fazl-i-Husain, and this was what was always written on his name-plate outside his house. When he received titles from Government and was pressed by his friends to join in public celebrations, he repeatedly refused and no function of such a nature was ever held.

His mind was capable of seeing clearly and getting to the root of things. Anything vague and hazy was to him unworthy of consideration. He always wanted concrete facts and figures, something tangible and known which could be demonstrated to others to make others see things in the same way as he saw them. His political testament *Punjab Politics* reveals his great power of exact analysis, scientific detachment, and judicial impartiality. He was always definite, downright and precise in his assertions. He threw out his challenge with sharpness of conviction, and determination to implant conviction in others.

He managed meetings with a success that astonished persons who did not know him. Possessed of almost medium-like sensitiveness to everyone around him, he judged motives, characters and subconscious impulses, and knew what each man was going to say next, with the result that in a gathering his opponents were like men playing blind man's buff. His intelligence was not of the platform, and his life did not begin with the footlights and end with painted scenes, gorgeous imagery, dazzling vestments, and vociferous shouts of *zindabad*; instead he possessed powers of organization, and while he fully believed in the value of dignified propaganda, he generally preferred to work quietly. He always knew how the masses would react to a particular policy. These qualities turned him into a successful leader of men, and invested his personality with

great power. The capacity of clear thinking, uninfluenced by popular prejudices and personal predilections, enabled him to judge with great accuracy how political forces would move or shape themselves. Nothing could escape his keen observation in the Government departments entrusted to his care. He would never tolerate slipshod work in any quarter, and would not allow anybody to take a light view of his duties. He did not spare himself, and was not disposed to spare others. In spite of frequent spells of ill-health he was an indefatigable worker; and his notes and arguments on Government files were models of brevity and lucidity.

As a speaker he was always heard with absorbed interest. He had a voice of rich and mellow modulation; an effortless command of appropriate diction; and a calm, consular but engaging manner of address. Whether in opening or in reply, he displayed the same confidence and composure. Graceful in attack, he was firm, but not savage, in defence. When he came to deal with the concrete, he stated, argued and demonstrated his case with the precision and amplitude of an accomplished advocate. His thorough masculine grasp of facts suggested infinite toil and reflection. He had a courage that never blustered, and a persuasiveness that seldom sacrificed substance to fancy. His triumphs in debate were achieved, not by any rhetorical flourishes, nor by dramatic or melodramatic action, but by the sterling force of plain reason plainly expressed. In retort and repartee he was an adept and left a distinct mark on the spirit and practice of debate in the Punjab legislature.

Fazl-i-Husain was a lonely man, and his capacity for feeling strongly made him suffer in isolation and silence. The various barriers and restraints he had imposed on himself made an intimate friendship almost impossible. He was extremely sensitive, and his acute critical ability led him to judge men with a severity which left little place for emotional attachments. Men, generally speaking, were to him mere pawns which he moved with his deft fingers across the political stage. He had no taste for social enter-

tainment and relaxation which would have given him an opportunity for developing friendships. His family life did not afford him much comfort amidst a world abounding in human viciousness and pettiness. His relationship with his eldest and youngest daughters had a peculiar tenderness, and a greater part of the little time he gave to his family was spent with them; otherwise, there was hardly anything to distinguish his behaviour towards his family from that towards remote relations or friends. He had too strong a sense of duty and station in life to feel that his family was an encumbrance, but it was a burden in the sense that it brought him no joy or happiness, and instead created problems and difficulties requiring both time and energy. He had no interest in art, poetry, literature, or (except is so far as it related to social and political affairs) religion, such as might have afforded him comfort and relief from the realities of everyday life. He, however, loved the quiet beauty of nature, and while touring in the countryside enjoyed the lanscapes and the sunset along the various rivers and canals of his Province as symbols of nature's healing influence.

In his estimate of men and affairs he always looked beyond appearances. A big name or a title counted for nothing, real worth was the only criterion. No one could overawe him or browbeat him; in a conflict of personalities he always stood calm, resolute and unconquerable. His self-respect was unbending. He was charged by his enemies with a love of intrigue and for underhand methods, but, although he certainly liked to pull all the strings he could in order to secure his object, he never descended to anything dishonourable. He was more politically minded and had a more acute intelligence than most people he had to deal with in the Punjab, and as his calculating methods often outwitted the more downright onslaughts of those who opposed him, such charges are not difficult to understand.

One of the causes of his success was that he was acutely conscious of his own limitations as well as of those imposed on him by his circumstances; and this realization made him

avoid failures by avoiding impossible undertakings. Thus his followers were rarely asked to face a failure which could have been avoided by forethought. This inspired them with confidence, and they attributed to him greater powers than he in fact possessed. He derived his strength from his ruthless pursuit of the ends of his policy, because every one of his followers was conscious of the fact that if they stood in the way of his principles no personal considerations would save them from being sacrificed. Besides, he regarded his official position as a means towards an end, and he was not afraid to quit office, because he had the ability and the means to earn his livelihood otherwise. On several occasions in connection with certain questions of policy and principle as a minister or Member of the Viceroy's Council he offered to resign. This inspired respect in those in authority.

In religious matters Fazl-i-Husain was most tolerant. Independently of his personal views about religion, he conceived of it as a necessity without which the great majority of human beings could not exist. He recognized its immense potentialities for good. He did not regard one religion as in any way superior to another, because the question of preference was to him an individual choice depending on the nature and the upbringing of the person concerned. "As regards religion," he once wrote, "a child grows in society with heredity; brought up in society and family he grows in an atmosphere wherein certain aptitudes exist. What is called freedom of thought inculcated in modern educational institutions is nothing else but a reflection of certain conceptions of so-called independence of thought which in its turn becomes a sort of mental slavery. A devotion to pagan ideals is but a form of religion. High-ground discipline controlling Roman Catholic creed is no more a slavery than the creed of free thought, the former acts as forms of physical manifestations of slavery while the other has subtle forms of slavery itself. Then you put me a question—does science contradict the precepts of religion? You see, there is not a very strong foundation for a physical test as the touchstone of know-

ledge. There have been many men of very superior intellectual attainments who have taken up the task of reconciling science and religion. At the outset one is faced with the difficulty of defining religion, separating the dogma from religion. Personally, I do not attach any very great value to it. Undoubtedly, the essence of religion may be treated like the exercises which precede the study of any branch of human thought. If mathematics, science, literature and languages need drilling through exercises, why not Theism, or Religion need the same? Admittedly, human beings differ widely in intelligence and application and necessarily they could not all be given the same form or stage of religion. Religion, like many other things, is essentially a personal matter: perhaps, more so than any other phase of human thought. After all, does it not come to this: We are free because we feel we are free. We must have religion because we feel the need of religion? The critic may very rightly pull the argument, in either case, to pieces."[1]

As for himself, although he spent the greater part of his life in fighting for Muslim rights, he did not observe religious practices such as saying prayers five times a day or fasting, though he never omitted socio-religious functions such as the Id prayers. He did not wish to impose his view of religion on anyone, and this is well borne out by the attitude he adopted towards his sons in the matter of religion. Writing to his son Azim Husain he said: "On my part I adopted what I thought was the policy of *laisser faire*, feeling that we were living in the times of individualism thirty years or so ago. I wanted each one of you to have your way, and I am not sorry for it, because after all, very strong and strict discipline may show good results in the beginning but is likely to give way when the discipline is taken away and a reaction sets in. My idea is that as you gain experience you will realize that any individual, however successful, well informed or even gifted he may be, he is but an individual in a society of millions, and in almost every respect, intellectual, religious, spiritual,

[1] Letter dated November 10, 1934, to his son, Azim Husain.

worldly, there are hundreds and thousands of men of distinction and excellence and no one can really feel so self-important as to consider himself of any great account. The question then arises to what extent is it right for one without having specialized in a matter to take upon oneself to lay down the law, especially in the case of one's own children so as to impress them and thus to make their youthful minds more or less adopt his own views. If they on study and enquiry arrived at the views that he has, it is very gratifying to him, but to have drilled them into those views is the act of a tyrant or of one who has very high and exalted notion of his views and ideas. Again, there are aspects of one's ideas, thoughts and feelings which cannot be conveyed by language and which cannot be received, understood or adopted by others unless their mind is attuned for such reception, understanding or adoption."[1]

Writing to a Sikh student who offered to become a Muslim if he could secure a post, he said: "I am so sad and so sorry that you should think of changing your religion for the sake of service and that you should think me so unreasonable as to wish you to change your religion in order to make sure of my help. My advice to you is to stick to the religion in which you were born, study it deeply and thoroughly and act in accordance with its dictates. When you are grown up and have had an occasion to study other religions, it is only then that you should think of changing your religion. . . You may rest assured that it will afford me the greatest possible pleasure to help young men irrespective of what their religion may be."[2]

Fazl-i-Husain began his public life in 1905 at the age of twenty-eight when his mind and ideas were already fully matured. There is a continuous line running through his utterances and writings and through all that he did from then until his death in 1936. There was never any hint of his adopting ideas without forethought. The views he propounded on his return from England in 1902 in his lectures, he spent the rest of his life in carrying out in practice. If Fazl-i-Husain failed to achieve in several

[1] Letter dated November 3, 1934.

[2] Letter to Gurbachan Singh, student, Khalsa College, Amritsar.

respects what he intended, it was not due to lack of effort or ability on his part, but was largely due to the severe limitations which the conditions under which he worked imposed on him. In the sphere of constitutional development, for example, all that he achieved or failed to achieve must be judged with reference to the limitations of dyarchy, and not to the extensive powers now wielded by ministers under provincial autonomy. Similarly, if he failed to achieve greater eminence, it was not due to any major weakness in his make-up; it was mainly due to the narrow scope which the existing conditions in the country offered him. He represented India creditably at the session of the League of Nations held at Geneva in 1927, but the subservience of India to British policy prevented his having another opportunity to show what he could do at an international conference. It has been recognized that not the least hardship which the Indian mind has endured is the fact that almost every Indian achievement remains provincial and circumscribed. Nowhere else have so many first-class abilities had to be contented with second-class careers. No matter how great an Indian may be, in brains or personality, he knows that few outside his own countrymen can appreciate his quality. If an Indian has managed to transcend the bounds that circumstances set to his opportunity or reputation, as often as not it is the mere charlatan who has done this.[1]

So much for the personality of Fazl-i-Husain; what is more important is the significance of his life and work for the future of India. He proved by personal example that the cause of democracy in these days of dictatorships is not yet altogether lost. He was opposed to dictatorship as an essentially undesirable institution which crushed individual liberty and personality. He considered the price paid for achieving efficiency under a dictatorship excessive. For him the true object of politics was to raise the economic and cultural level of the common man, and though this was a painfully laborious process, it was necessary and worthy of sacrifice and effort. For him the end did not

[1] E. Thompson: *The Reconstruction of India*, 1930, p. 63.

justify the means, because no political achievement can be permanent or of lasting benefit if the means adopted are violent or dishonest and destructive of self-respect. He abhorred all short-cuts, whether for acquiring power in local politics or for achieving national freedom. He was critical of the dictatorial attitude of some of the Congress leaders, and said that it was a grievous departure from the traditional Congress ideals in which he believed. He demonstrated his belief in popular institutions by refusing to bring local bodies under governmental control. In the provincial and the central legislatures so long as his health allowed, he took infinite pains to argue, to teach, to discuss, to persuade and to convince the members of his party and the legislature, rather than drive them with the force of the authority he wielded.

Another feature of his faith in democracy was his proving by example that it was possible to act democratically and at the same time honestly without resort to base forms of propaganda, from the platform or through the Press. Hard work in the office, the committee room and the legislature, with honesty of purpose, could achieve a great deal; and resort to popular emotional appeals, mass meetings, hysteria and public deception was unnecessary. It was possible to work democracy to a very large extent without the evils generally associated with it in India. The chief lesson of his life and work, therefore, was its demonstration that democracy could be worked in India and the masses elevated thereby. In the later years of his life his political behaviour may, indeed, have leaned towards the dictatorial, partly because he felt that he was superior in knowledge and intellect to those who surrounded him, and partly because his ill-health made him incapable of the physical effort required for working popular institutions, but he never lost faith and hope in democracy. Disruption and disintegration in the political life of the province were on the increase, and had it not been for his strong hand the Unionist Party would have split, the Muslims would have formed several groups, and Punjab politics would have again become a plaything in the hands

of the bureaucracy. Considering what tremendous power the bureaucracy has always wielded in the Punjab, this statement rests on what happened in the past and what might have happened again in his time, but for the formation of a strong non-communal political party wielding a majority in the legislature.

As regards other aspects of his political career, there is sharp divergence of opinion among critics. One view held generally by some non-Muslims is that he was not a leader of the type of Motilal Nehru, "who could afford to be daring enough at times to oppose his own community in order to demonstrate that the Muslim community could equally have confidence and faith in him as their common leader."[1] He was, it is admitted, opposed to the bureaucracy, but he was not a nationalist, and spent all his life in promoting the interests of his community. Pretending to help the backward classes of the province he really wanted to help the Muslims of the Punjab. His solicitude for the land-owning classes meant the setting up of rural interests against urban interests for the benefit of Muslims. His plea for the curtailment of the power of the bureaucracy meant that it should come to terms with him and his policy. "He did not merely stand aloof from non-co-operation," writes one critic, "but worked against it in his own unfussy and subterranean manner. By doing so he assured for himself a long succession of offices. From a patriot he became a communalist and he ceased to care for the larger interests of the country. Freedom and other larger issues occupied no place or only a minor place in his mind, and he began to think in terms of percentages for his community in the legislatures, the local boards and the services. Like Sir Syed Ahmad, he had been largely instrumental in keeping his community away from the Congress."[2]

The truth of the matter was that Fazl-i-Husain's realistic and practical outlook and abhorrence of waste of effort in pursuit of the impossible made him decide in 1920 against the policy of non-co-operation. A man, he said, can be

[1] Duni Chand: *The Ulster of India*, 1937, p. 35.

[2] Diwan Chand Sharma: 'The Truth about Mian Fazl-i-Husain' in *The Modern Review*, June 1937.

a nationalist without being a Congressman, just as he can be a Congressman without being a nationalist. He believed like Spender that "unceasing adjustment to changes of circumstances, thought and opinion is the essence of statesmanship." He was, therefore, not one of those idealists who ensconce themselves behind high sounding theories. He grappled with the stern realities of life, and he knew how to make the best of a bad national situation rendered worse by the domineering attitude of a foreign bureaucracy. He was by temperament a radical, though the necessities of work as an associate of British imperialism occasionally forced him to put up with some aspects of administration which Indian nationalism could not approve. He looked for material progress. Independence, he said, would not come by passing resolutions, holding conferences, and propaganda; it would come by improvement of economic conditions, amelioration of backward classes and areas, advancement of education, development of local self-government, and organization of the masses. Before an appeal could be made to the alien ruler, Indians must put their own house in order and the Congress was not thinking enough of this.

With these ideas firmly ingrained in his mind Fazl-i-Husain accepted office in 1920. He dominated the Punjab for fifteen years, and while he was a minister and later a Member of the Punjab Government, practically none of the legislation passed failed to bear traces of his strong personality. As a member of the Viceroy's Council his failures were many, but his achievements cannot be belittled for that reason. In the matter of reforms for the N.W.F.P., Indianization of services, recommendations for the Government of India Act 1935, resistance to repressive legislation, Indian interests in South Africa, communal representation in services, and adjustment of fair claims of the Muslims, he influenced the policy of the Government of India in important respects. On all occasions he acted like a pre-non-co-operation Congressman; and, on most occasions, a 1930 Congressman (had he chosen to accept office with all its limitations) could not have acted

differently. He justified co-operation with Government on the ground that if it is not possible to achieve at once all that you desire, the advantages of comparatively smaller gains should not be spurned, though that does not mean that your efforts towards your final objective should be relaxed. He wanted to utilize the opportunities offered during the interim period to the best of his ability. The extent to which he influenced Government from 1920 to 1935 was his justification for his breach with the Congress in 1920.

As a constructive statesman he had more in common with Congressmen like Gokhale, Pherozeshah Mehta, Badruddin Tyabjee and Surendra Nath Banerjea than with Congressmen of the non-co-operation or the civil disobedience era. He occupied himself with concrete achievements in every sphere of administration, and with the formation of a party that would keep alive the traditions and programme of the Congress of pre-non-co-operation days. In other words, after the people had been roused to a sense of their great destiny, he believed that national energy should not run in destructive channels, but should be properly controlled, guided and directed into fruitful activity. His policy is vindicated by the fact that in 1938, after nearly eighteen years of non-co-operation, the Congress decided to co-operate. It was the realization that the Congress was going into the political wilderness that made him leave the Congress. He, perhaps more than any other Indian who was called upon to share the burden of administration, gave a practical demonstration of the possibility of finding Indians capable of acquitting themselves creditably in positions of great responsibility. He became the most effective exponent of the doctrine of intelligent co-operation with the Government. It would appear that any failures in which he became involved were inherent in the administration in which he was also involved. Criticism of him is really, therefore, criticism not of his abilities or character (he did all that anyone could do; and more than most, for nationalism within Government), but criticism of Governmental set-up in India. To criticize him for what he failed to

achieve is, therefore, irrelevant. Those who disagree, however violently, with his policy should rather use him as an example of how even the best men in Indian life are hampered by co-operation. The issue is really one of basic policy —whether co-operation is ever under any circumstances justified. Those who believe whole-heartedly in perpetual non-co-operation (and no others) can criticize, and on that point the issue can be joined. Even the Congress has adopted non-co-operation spasmodically. The only real question that can be asked is whether he was right to believe that something could be achieved for Indian progress through the existing administration. To answer 'no' to that, though possible, involves more implications than most people are ready to shoulder.

There is, however, this to be said, that Fazl-i-Husain failed to appreciate one important aspect of the work of the Congress, namely, the rousing of national consciousness and awakening of self-respect, just as Congressmen failed to credit co-operators like Fazl-i-Husain with patriotism or appreciate the value of their constructive work for the country. In the heat of controversy both overlooked the fact that to lay a sound foundation for the future India needed them both, and that in retrospect India would cherish and honour the memory of both. They might serve their country in different ways, but their objective was the same. The propagation of the 'impossible' ideals of the Congress created conditions for 'practical men' and neither without the other could have brought India any nearer the goal of becoming an independent self-respecting nation. A certain rigidity of mind and inability to attach sufficient importance to idealism made Fazl-i-Husain underestimate the value of the emotional appeal of the Civil Disobedience movement. In this respect he made no contribution to the cause of Indian nationalism, and on a few occasions his policies damaged it.

One of the most valuable aspects of Fazl-i-Husain's work was his contribution to a movement, which has made considerable headway in India during recent years, and which aims at bringing backward classes and communities

into line with the more advanced ones, so that they may share the advantages of the country's progress towards responsible self-government. It was this sympathy for the less favoured classes of the people which inspired his efforts for the regeneration of his own community. He was the first politician in the Punjab who made a successful effort to bridge the gulf between the rich and the poor, the landlord and the tenant, the labourer and the capitalist, the creditor and the debtor. On the one hand he tried to reconcile their differences, and on the other he did all that was possible to ameliorate the condition of the masses by the spread of education and social services. As soon as he acquired power under the Montford Reforms, he protested against the preferential treatment shown to urban areas, and adopted the policy of helping backward areas. This led him to assert his championship of the rural masses, and he came into conflict with the Mahasabha, consisting primarily of urban Hindus who accused him of raising the cry of 'backward areas' in order really to help the Muslims. Later, in the Government of India, on the same principle, when the Congress refused to agree to what he regarded as reasonable safeguards for Muslims, he opposed the sectional nationalism of some of the Congressmen. The organization of the non-Brahmin party in Madras, Mahatma Gandhi's anti-untouchability movement, and Fazl-i-Husain's efforts for the uplift of Muslims and the rural classes, were all waves of the same great tide in Indian political life. This tide was bound to be resisted by vested interests. The Brahmins of Madras criticized non-Brahmins for attempting to establish the rule of the mob over an aristocracy of intellect. Gandhi's Harijan movement was described as an interference with religion, and Fazl-i-Husain's efforts for the protection of the Muslims and the rural classes were denounced as rank communalism. Gandhi had the whole might of the Congress to support him, but in the Punjab Fazl-i-Husain had to fight the battle alone. Without such a movement in the country, Swaraj might have meant the handing over of India to the tyranny of a clearly marked out class of 'Haves' over the poor and helpless mass of 'Have-nots.' The future political life of the country, Fazl-i-Husain said, should be based not on

religious divisions but on economic differences. In 1936, therefore, he asked for the co-operation of other parties with the reorganized Unionist Party on the basis of a purely economic programme. "He was a nationalist," writes C. S. Ranga Iyer, "which in these communal times might sound incredible. His heart was set on producing a national as against a communal spirit. In his own province he would not have a communal party founded on a communal principle hampered by a communal outlook. Although the Unionist Party of which he was the father had a very large Muslim majority, its goal, its purpose, he felt must not be communal."

Next, Fazl-i-Husain may be considered as a leader of Muslims. Apart from a complete hold over the Punjab Muslims from 1920 onwards, throughout the years 1930 to 1935 he was the virtual dictator of the Muslim Conference and Muslim League politics and guided Muslim politicians all over India. He was the mind behind all the Muslim conferences, memoranda, resolutions, agitations and deputations to England. His notes were prepared with the utmost care, and every Muslim politician had a typed copy of them in his hands whenever there were meetings and conferences in India or Britain. His political disciples were to be met with everywhere. But for his persistent and vigorous efforts to rescue his community from the morass of intellectual stagnation, economic backwardness, political inferiority, into which they had been plunged by their own apathy and indolence, the Muslims of the Punjab would probably still not be far removed from the position of hewers of wood and drawers of water in the province of their much-vaunted majority. He roused them from their lethargy to confront an age of merciless competition; and had it not been for the position he secured for them under the Communal Award and the Government of India Act of 1935, politically and economically they would have deteriorated still further. For educational, economic and political reasons Muslims had become more or less a palsied limb of the Indian nation, and Fazl-i-Husain wanted to see this palsied limb restored, by special treatment, to life and vigour, and made of use for the country as a whole. As a leader of Muslims he demonstrated his ability

to lead public opinion rather than to always follow it. On several occasions, such as during Hijrat and Khilafat agitations, Pan-Islamic movement, and in connection with separate electorates and the Shahidganj agitation, he pursued independent policies, which were fully justified by subsequent events.

Next to the regeneration of the Muslim community in the national interest, Fazl-i-Husain was devoted to the general development of the Punjab. When he entered politics he found his province politically inert, and political ideas and parties in a most rudimentary stage. He awakened them from their deep somnolence, brought them face to face with the gravity of their condition, and made them conscious of their strength and importance. The Punjab, which had hitherto not participated in raising the national demand, now came into line with the rest of India. He gave a check to the most powerful bureaucracy in India. When it was apprehended that Sir Michael O'Dwyer might have the Punjab excluded from Reforms on the same scale as other provinces, he led a successful agitation, with the result that Government could not resist the claim for equal reforms for the Punjab. Before his time, the Punjab had been considered a backward province; but as soon as he acquired power under the Montford Reforms he carried out schemes of development in education, local self-government, rural uplift, co-operation, agriculture, and irrigation with such success that within five years the Punjab came to be regarded as a front rank province. He toiled for years, spent laborious days and sleepless nights, and left behind him a party which, for the first time in the history of the Punjab, knew its mind and had the courage to follow its convictions. From the poor material of reactionary, backward, ignorant landlords he created a progressive (with, of course, certain limitations characteristic of the landlord class) rural bloc in the form of the Unionist Party; and instead of letting them become an obstruction to reform, made them the spearhead of a reform movement. This party building will remain the principal landmark of his political work, a whole people brought under a common standard, inspired by common ideals and a determination to work out their own destiny.

There is no doubt that had Fazl-i-Husain lived, despite opposition from various quarters, he would have dominated the Punjab under provincial autonomy. He depended on the support of the rural masses, and particularly of the Muslim rural masses. It was they in whose heart he dwelt and for whose well-being he sacrificed his life. Just as he had never forsaken them throughout his public life, they would not have forsaken him in his fight against his adversaries. He had given them positive and material proof of his passionate desire for their well-being. Schools had sprung up in their villages for the education of their children. Panchayats had been constituted in their villages to enable them to settle their disputes at home rather than ceaselessly to roam the dusty compounds of the Law Courts. Rural dispensaries and Health Centres had come for the first time within their reach. Veterinary dispensaries were not very far away, and their cattle could be sent for treatment whenever necessary. Credit facilities offered by co-operative societies had mitigated their fear of the hated money-lender. Debt legislation had given them hope of living again as self-respecting human beings rather than as slaves in bondage. Government service was no longer the preserve of the urbanite; the humble ruralite could now also hope for his share. The horrible spectre of repeated and protracted revenue settlemnts was removd. Peasants knew now how much and when they could be asked to pay. Government officials were no longer the overbearing despots they had once been.

These were all tangible and readily understandable changes, and the peasants knew the man who was to a very great extent responsible for their being treated like citizens rather than outcastes. He had not harangued them in mass meetings, nor had he held *Durbars*, or passed in processions, yet they had seen him and some had talked to him sitting in various rest houses or walking over the countryside all over the province. He had talked to them in their own language, quietly and informally, and of things nearest their hearts, and they at once knew he was *their* man. He had confidence and faith in them just as great as the trust they reposed in him. They were his ultimate sanction for all he did. When his

leadership was challenged, ingratitude mortified him, and in despair he offered to quit political life provided he might publicly explain why he was going to desert those he had served. His opponents did not dare to accept the challenge.

Both as an All-India Muslim leader and as a Punjabi leader, Fazl-i-Husain thought of India as a whole, and believed in the growth and development of a strong, united and vigorous nation. He also believed that this was not possible without the proportionate contribution of every minority. He was convinced that Muslims, on account of their traditions and culture, had a definite and an important contribution to make, and every means should be adopted to enable them to make it. The Indian nation should be composed of all classes and all communities, and not be dominated by any one particular class or community. It was an article of faith with him that the backwardness of the Muslim community had been holding back national progress in India. Therefore, as a minister, he helped his backward community in order to raise it to the level of other communities, to enable Muslims to take an equal share in political, economic and social development. He fixed definite percentages for their admission to the services both in the Punjab and in the Government of India. He fixed the percentage of admissions for Muslim students into Government colleges. He devised a formula for the reconstitution of local bodies, which enabled Muslims to form working majorities in several of them. He fought indomitably for separate electorates in the provincial and central legislatures, and was successful in having these retained under the Government of India Act of 1935.

Throughout the three troubled years of the Round Table Conferences and the Joint Parliamentary Committee he kept his head, and never for a moment hesitated or faltered in his support of separate electorates for Muslims, even when Sir Muhammad Shafi and other Muslim leaders were wavering. This, however, does not mean that he conceived of Hindus and Muslims as irreconcilable and separate peoples. Although he refused to specify any definite period, he regarded safeguards such as communal representation for Muslims in legislatures, local bodies, services and educational

institutions as a temporary expedient, to be retained until such time as Muslims were not able to stand on a level with other communities. These safeguards were only a stage, leading to the final union of the various communities. Indeed, in 1936 he was prepared to abolish separate electorates provided the proportionate strength of the Muslim population was reflected in the voting register. He regarded communal tension as an outcome of economic, political and social inequality, and of the presence of a third party; the removal of both of which would liquidate the so-called communal question. As an example of what Hindu-Muslim unity (as represented by the formation of a strong party based on an economic programme and communal understanding) could achieve to eliminate the third party, whenever vested European interests tended to operate against Indian interests he fought for Indian rights with the support his Party gave him.

Fazl-i-Husain was, however, convinced that the Hindus wanted to dominate by sheer force of numbers, and, therefore, he desired that under the British Government the Muslims should rapidly rehabilitate themselves and acquire strength so as not to be crushed when political power passed into the hands of the majority community. For such time as the British might retain power in India he wanted to devise every possible safeguard to prevent further exploitation of the Muslims by various classes of Hindus, whether industrialists, landlords, shopkeepers or money-lenders. He also wanted Muslims to make up the deficiency caused by neglect in every sphere of life for over half a century. The greater part of his political life was, therefore, devoted to the readjustment of rights between various communities so that his own community might have a chance to improve its economic and political position. His underlying assumption throughout was that in spite of strong religious and cultural differences Muslims are not cut off from other communities in so radical a manner as to make economic and political co-operation impossible. In short, ultimate aims should be political and not religious, the only condition being that the Muslims should be equal partners in the future Government of India and should not be reduced

to the status of pariahs or depressed classes. Genuine freedom for India could never be attained through the instrumentality of a section of the people only. Self-Government would have to be broadbased on the willing acquiescence of all communities inhabiting the continent of India. He looked forward to the uplift and unification of the Muslims as a stepping stone to effective joint action and co-operation with the major community which would lead India to the goal of Swaraj.

This view of Muslim politics, as advocated by Fazl-i-Husain, was generally accepted by Muslims all over India, but in 1936 a radically different view of Muslim politics came to be advocated. This had its birth in the philosophical speculations of Dr. Iqbal. He started with the premise that on account of their religion and culture Muslims were radically different from Hindus, and the two could not possibly co-operate with each other either politically or economically. Therefore the only solution was the creation of a Muslim State distinct from the Hindu State. It might be true that in several areas in India Hindus and Muslims spoke the same language, observed similar social customs, participated in common economic pursuits, and belonged to the same race or mixture of races; yet the difference of religious belief was a difference which transcended all else, and should be the determining factor in every sphere of human activity. Dr. Iqbal was opposed to the territorial nationalism which had flourished in the West, and advocated a nationalism based first and last on religion.[1]

Fazl-i-Husain saw grave dangers in this policy, and offered strong resistance by forming a non-communal party in the Punjab, while through the All-India Muslim Conference he advocated the formation of non-communal parties on similar lines all over India. That on account of this resistance Mr. Jinnah failed to achieve his object is clear from the fact that in the general elections of 1936 Muslim League candidates were returned to the provincial assemblies in a microscopic minority. "At that time less than 4½% of the Muslim electorate was persuaded to vote

[1] Ahmed Shafi: 'Two Punjabi Mussalmans' in *The Indian Review*, August 1942.

for the League."[1] In the Punjab in a House of 175 there was only one Muslim Leaguer. In 1937 at Lucknow after the death of Fazl-i-Husain, when there was no outstanding Muslim leader[2] left to challenge him, Mr. Jinnah gave a new orientation to Muslim politics; and this orientation brought him in 1940 to the idea of Pakistan. Muslim politics have ever since pursued a purely communal and separatist policy. The struggle between Fazl-i-Husain's theory and the Pakistan theory is not yet over; but the fact that on the eve of the inauguration of the new constitution party politics took a definitely national turn rather than a communal one, was to a considerable degree due to Fazl-i-Husain. Punjab Muslims and the Muslims of India now stand at the cross-roads. One path is that explored by Sir Syed Ahmad and Fazl-i-Husain, and leads to the rehabilitation of the Muslim community with the ultimate ideal of making India one strong and united nation. The other is the path traced by Dr. Iqbal and Mr. Jinnah. It leads to separatism and the partition of India. It depends on the present Muslim political leaders of the Punjab and India, what fate awaits Indian Muslims of the future.

After the death of Fazl-i-Husain, his friends and followers wondered how best to commemorate his memory. A statue was suggested, but the more orthodox Muslims opposed this on religious grounds. Finally it was decided to build (and appropriately for a man who had spent the greater part of his life in the cause of education), a *Fazl-i-Husain Memorial Library*, and a fund was opened for the purpose; as a result of which about Rs. 60,000 were collected. With the help of a Government contribution of about Rs. 50,000, a fine library was built in the precincts of Government College, Lahore. Laying the foundation stone, on October 26, 1937, Lord Linlithgow said: "In thinking of him today we think of a great

[1] W. C. Smith: *Modern Islam in India*, 1943, p. 239.

[2] There had been an epidemic of death among Muslim leaders of an All-India stature. The death of Hakim Ajmal Khan had been followed by that of Maulana Muhammad Ali. Then came Dr. Ansari and the moderate Sir Muhammad Shafi. Those who remained could not assume All-India leadership. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was by nature a savant and a recluse. Sir Sikander Hyat was a comparatively unknown factor incapable of rising to an All-India status, and Mr. Fazl-ul-Haq was much too preoccupied with local politics to think of All-India politics.

politician, a great educationist, a great Punjabi, a great Mussalman, and most important of all, a great Indian." The opening ceremony of the *Fazl-i-Husain Memorial Library* was performed by Sir Henry Craik, the Governor, who said: "He (Fazl-i-Husain) was a great enthusiast of the advancement of his country, his province and his community. But this enthusiasm was tempered by experience with a notable sobriety of judgment; his political sagacity was quite exceptional and he possessed in a remarkable degree the capacity for looking ahead and seeing all sides of a problem. He had a profound belief in democratic institutions and in his own person and by his own achievements he proved the truth of that belief. I think no one in the whole of India was quicker to appreciate the possibilities of the Reforms of 1921 or did more at that time to awaken the political consciousness of his countrymen. He was a great parliamentarian jealous of the rights and traditions of the Legislative Council and played a leading part in building up high standards of debate and conduct in that body. In the sphere of education he was particularly conspicuous and no one in my time has done more to fling wide open the gates of knowledge and draw the multitudes in. Under his guidance education became, not a prerogative of a few but the cheap possession of many. He had a great gift for friendship and a gift too of inspiring affection among the followers and supporters, without which he could never have founded the great party of which he was the first leader. He was kindly, patient and tolerant with those who differed from his views. I never remember seeing him ruffled or perturbed or hearing him utter a harsh word or give a hasty or unconsidered opinion. To scrupulous personal integrity he added a single-minded devotion to public service and a deep sympathy with the poor and the depressed. He died as he would have desired and as we should perhaps all desire to die, in harness. When we look back on that life of devoted service to his country and of a perpetual triumph of the spirit over flesh, we may well think that on that July morning three years ago when he passed away there must have been heard somewhere in this country that he served so well the faint echoes of the trumpets that sounded for him on the other side."

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